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14 OCTOBER 1995

# INDEPENDENT

No 2,805

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Tory conference closes with PM's rallying call and a claim that the tide is turning



'I know what it's like when the week's money runs out by Thursday': John Major addressing the Tory conference in Blackpool yesterday

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Major widens 'the great divide'

DONALD MACINTYRE  
Political Editor

John Major yesterday identified the Tories' fifth-term mission as the modernisation of Britain into a low-tax, deregulated, "enterprise centre of Europe" capable of tackling the economic and social challenges of the 21st century while Labour was still responding to those of the 1980s.

An effectively delivered, strategically coherent and warmly received speech, deliberately widening what the Prime Minister called the "great divide" between the Tories and Labour on education, tax, crime and devolution, appeared last night to have persuaded many party activists that they now have at least a fighting chance of bucking the polls and winning the next election.

"Millions", he assured his party, had still to make up their minds over whether to back the Tories or the "lightweight alternative" offered by Labour. Mr Major projected Conservatism as the force to tackle the competitive threat from the tiger economies of Asia, in a closing leadership speech designed to stamp the Blackpool conference as the turning point for a "refreshed and uplifted" Tory party after three years of languishing behind a revitalised Opposition in the polls.

Unusually for a prime-ministerial conference speech, Mr Major's rallying call to a party that had been rocked at the outset by the devastating defection to Labour of the MP Alan Howarth included a busy series of substantive policy announcements. They included a 5,000 increase in the number of police officers, a doubling of the 30,000 state-funded assisted schools. In a deftly populist measure for the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Mr Major announced that the annuity paid to holders of the Victoria and George Crosses would rise from £100 to £1,300.

He went out of his way to lavish praise on his Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, who is currently locked in a battle with the Treasury over her budget for next year. And he ex-corporated the privately-educated Labour leader, Tony Blair, for "locking away a ladder" from children in low-income homes to abolish the

places at public schools and the culmment of M15 and a new national crime squad to support the fight against drugs and organised crime.

Mr Major committed himself again to moves to make all schools grant-maintained and, for the first time, to a new freedom for religious and specialist schools, which will allow, for example, a growth in Islamic

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from his own experience, he spoke of the joy and the heart-break that had characterised the garden ornament business run by his father 40 years ago, which failed owing to his ill health. "I know what it's like when the money for the week runs out by Thursday," he said.

"I know the knuckers and seecers who may never have taken a risk in their comfortable lives aren't fit to wipe the boots of the risk-takers of Britain."

But, reminding the conference that it was also "a strong Tory tradition that you and I look after ourselves and our families before we turn to others to pay our bills", he left an appreciative audience in no doubt that the Tories' welfare system for the 21st century would not tolerate those on welfare "who don't work" while rewarding "prudence, thrift and family responsibility".

He foreshadowed potentially one of the most far-reaching proposals in the next general election programme by highlighting the role that "the more flexible use of pensions" could play in helping the elderly pay for their own future care, in meet the otherwise uncontrollable pressure on the state which the care needs of the elderly would impose by the end of the century.

While promising that if others in Europe "go federalist, Conservative Britain will not". Mr Major's language on Europe was several light years away from the stridently nationalistic tone that was struck by his Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, on Tuesday.

Asserting that he was "for Europe, not against it", Mr Major appealed for understanding of why Britain's part-

After two weeks of conference rhetoric, where's the clear blue water?

	Conservative	Labour
Tax	Cuts as soon as possible, including inheritance and Capital Gains taxes	Windfall tax on utilities pays for jobs programme. Possible cut in fuel VAT
Crime	Life for second-time repeat and fixed terms for third-time burglars	"Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime"
Constitution	No change, except a hint of giving the Scots more say	Electoral assemblies for Scotland, Wales and London; Freedom of Information Act; referendum on electoral reform
Schools	60,000 assisted places at private schools; more grant-maintained schools	Assisted Places Scheme abolished to limit primary places to 30; GM schools back in LEA sphere
Workers' rights	No change - will never sign Social Chapter	Minimum wage; right to union representation
Railways	Sell Railtrack, franchise services	"A publicly owned, publicly accountable railway system"
Public spending	Aim for budget balance	Borrow to invest; inflation target "at least as tough as Tories"
Health service	Push for more GPs to be fundholders	GPs band together to "commission" services
Local councils	Council tax capping to stay, despite grassroots revolt	Compulsory competitive tendering to go
National Lottery	No change	Non-profit-making
Single European currency	Avoid if possible	Join if possible

ners wanted European unity as a guarantee against the wars and dictatorship that they had suffered over the last 50 years.

But the Prime Minister warned that the British government had not entered Europe "for a new tier of government", or "for Socialism through the back door". Promising, by no means for

the first time, that he was committed to the eventual abolition of capital gains and inheritance tax, as well the reduction of income tax, the Prime Minister declared that while the Government had had to put taxes up "to protect the vulnerable" in the recession, high spending and taxation were "no longer an option".

Accountants have been instructed to call a creditors' meeting later this month. Two years ago Albert Roux and his brother Michel put three of their celebrated London restaurants up for sale: Le Poulbot and Roud Britania in the City, and Gavers near Sloane Square.

## I am a scientist, not a politician - Nobel winner

TOM WILKIE  
Science Editor

The British physicist Joseph Rotblat, the winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, yesterday sharply rebuked Jacques Chirac and China's political leaders for hanging on to nuclear weapons.

Ironically, John Major, who was widely tipped as a possible winner, was criticised as a danger to world peace by the man who won the prize.

Professor Rotblat has spent his life campaigning against nuclear weapons - and the

award, worth £1m, comes 50 years after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Professor Rotblat has worked to build an influential organisation of scientists with specialist nuclear knowledge who could put pressure on offending governments.

Professor Rotblat yesterday called French nuclear testing in the Pacific "an outrage", adding that the prize award was "a message not only to the French but to the Chinese as well".

Professor Rotblat also criticised John Major's adherence

to nuclear weapons, saying that while they brought prestige they did not bring security, and he praised Mikhail Gorbachev as the man who had had the courage to end the Cold War. Professor Rotblat also said a nuclear weapon-free world was achievable.

The award goes jointly to Professor Rotblat and to the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs - the organisation founded 40 years ago following the publication in 1955 of the manifesto by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein warning humanity of



Prof Rotblat: 'A message'

the perils of thermonuclear warfare. Professor Rotblat, now 73, is the only one of the 11 original signatories still alive. The organisation is influential, but tiny, based in cramped offices opposite the British Museum in London.

Professor's biographer, page 3

## Roux's exotic foods prove to be a recipe for disaster

DAVID HELLIER

Some of the country's top chefs, eager to lay their hands on wild mushrooms or baby radicchio, will have to search a little harder this weekend. The company run by the celebrity chef, Albert Roux, which usually supplies them with exotic ingredients, has gone out of business.

Financial difficulties have forced Mr Roux, restaurateur to the rich and famous, to shut down his firm, Roux Lamartine, where debts are believed to be in the region of £1m.

Callers to his offices at New Covent Garden, south London, have been greeted with an

answerphone message saying: "Dear chefs. We are sorry to tell you that after a long struggle we have had to close down. Thank you for your support."

Industry experts say that up until five years ago Roux Lamartine had a pole position in supplying produce to the country's top restaurants. "You would know as soon as you ate at a restaurant that Roux Lamartine had supplied it," said one food expert.

But in recent years the market for such goods has been served by many more suppliers and the Roux's distinctiveness has become less marked.

The company's financial

problems led to Mr Roux, who is a director of a number of other companies including the one that operates Le Gavroche, the £100-a-head Mayfair restaurant, putting in £270,000 since April along with another director to help the company meet its liabilities. But it has not been enough.

Accountants have been instructed to call a creditors' meeting later this month.

Two years ago Albert Roux and his brother Michel put three of their celebrated London restaurants up for sale: Le Poulbot and Roud Britania in the City, and Gavers near Sloane Square.

### IN BRIEF

**Norwich Union bonanza**  
Up to 2.5 million Norwich Union policyholders are set to gain from a £1.7bn cash bonanza if they agree to allow the company to float on the stock market. The windfall could mean average bonuses of between £600 and £700. Page 22

**West lodger vanished**  
Rosemary and Frederick West seemed very happy the day after their lodger Shirley Robinson, 16 - who was pregnant by Mr West - disappeared. Winchester Crown Court heard. Her remains were found at the house 16 years later. Page 9

**Today's weather**  
England and Wales will be sunny after a foggy start. Page 2

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## news

# Judges prepare for sentencing battle in Lords

STEPHEN WARD and PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, was backed by the entire senior judiciary in opposing Michael Howard's plans to erode their discretion to decide criminal sentences.

And it became clear that the Home Secretary's plans would face strong opposition and likely defeat from an all-party coalition led by lawyers in the Lords.

At least five Law Lords were among many judges attending a reception given by the Prison Reform Trust on the terrace of the House of Lords on Wednesday night, giving an indication of how liberal the judiciary has now become. It was hosted by the former Lord Chief Justice Lord Lane, and addressed by the Law Lord, Lord Mustill.

Serving judges, even those who have criticised Mr Howard in the past, took the view yesterday that this was such a serious constitutional crisis that they would keep their heads down, and leave it to Lord Taylor. But a former Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson, was among the most savage critics. "This proposal to transfer responsibility for the time which a criminal spends in prison from the judges to politicians involves a constitutional change of epic proportions."

He said judges' mistakes

could be put right on appeal. But that "however mistaken [judges] may be, they are not swayed by sustained campaigns either for or against particular types of crime or particular criminals."

Lord Ackner, who recently retired as a Law Lord, but still sits in the House, said Mr Howard's "short-term political opportunism" had seriously provoked the judges. "It's pretty strong stuff when the Lord Chief Justice comes out within minutes against him. And he is representing the views of the judiciary as a whole. It's not a knee-jerk reaction by him."

"He's got a sufficient sensitivity to decide whether what he's doing is likely to be fully backed or not. To put up his statement immediately, in such a political context means he



Attacked: Michael Howard

must be sure. The imposition of any length of imprisonment, particularly if it's a substantial one, is a judicial function and is to be done by a judge and not a politician. If you are determining the length of a person's stay in prison it should be done in open court after hearing evidence and argument, and not done by a politician, in private, having heard neither evidence nor argument, and, unlike a court, with no right of appeal."

The Lords had supported extending judicial discretion by abolishing the mandatory life sentence for murder by almost 100 votes, before it had been defeated by the whipped Commons majority, and it was unlikely to allow discretion to be eroded.

Government sources made clear yesterday that they were ready for the judicial onslaught, and to turn the debate into a highly public one if need be.

"Judges cannot expect to operate without interference from politicians if they interfere in political decisions themselves," one source said.

"Politics is a hot kitchen. If the judges are stupid enough to put themselves in the firing line by opposing an absolutely central package it will be they who are damaged, not the Government."

Lord Donaldson, page 21

## Howard's plans could swell prison numbers by 21,500

HEATHER MILLS

Home Affairs Correspondent

Shock waves passed through the Prison Service yesterday as it emerged that Michael Howard's latest law and order package could swell the prison population by 21,500—a 41 per cent hike—and cost up to £36n simply to build enough new jails.

The scheme could also add an extra £520m a year to the taxpayer's £12.6n annual prison bill—that is 60 per cent of the £860m needed to fund nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds, or enough to pay the annual wages of 34,700 police officers.

With the prison population bursting at an all-time record of 52,000—far higher per head of population than our European partners—there are genuine fears of fuelling jail unrest. Not least because the withdrawal of remission, or the chances of only small periods of remission, removes the incentive for prisoners to behave.

According to analysis by the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO), it is the loss of remission which will lead to the biggest increase in inmates—delays in the release of all sentenced prisoners would gradually build up to an extra 15,000 on the daily population. The compulsory sentences for burglars and drug dealers are likely to add another 6,500.

Mr Howard claims his harsher policies of locking up more people has contributed to the recent five per cent drop in recorded crime. He will also contest the probation officers' statistics, claiming that stiffer penalties will act as a deterrent.

However, the Lord Chief Justice yesterday said: "What deters is the likelihood of being caught, which at the moment is small." Home Office research supports Lord Taylor's argument. It showed that, to reduce the 5 million recorded crimes a year by just one per cent, it would be necessary to lock up an extra 12,500 prisoners. Using

those figures, Mr Howard's plans will achieve a two per cent drop or 100,000 less offences.

However, penal reform groups and criminologists argue that any gain is short term. Stephen Shaw, of the Prison Reform Trust, said: "No one disputes that when burglars are locked up they are not burgling. The question is what happens when they are released? There are sufficient indications that prison makes it more likely that someone will re-offend."

The plans move the UK's penal policy out of line with its European partners and closer to the United States. But there, a three-fold increase in the prison population in the last 20 years—locking up one in every 200 Americans—has only succeeded in stabilising exceedingly high crime rates.

Yesterday, Harry Fletcher, of NAPO, said it was "folly" to follow the US example. "This will have disastrous consequences for the management of prisons," he said.

## Murder police in plea to husband

JAMES CUSICK

A man whose wife, 16-month-old daughter, and mother and father-in-law were found stabbed to death at their north London home was yesterday urged by police to "hand himself over so we can at least rule him out".

The hunt for Ibrahim Aderdour, 37, was extended yesterday to ports and airports. Despite confirming that Mr Aderdour and his wife Sophia, 32, were in the process of divorcing, police refused to say whether he was a suspect.

In a warning given during a press conference at Islington police station over yesterday's press coverage of the killings, the officer leading the investigation, Detective Superintendent Derek Dale, said: "We do not know that Mr Aderdour killed his family, so neither can anyone else."

Det Supt Dale confirmed that at 2pm on Thursday the police received an emergency call for help. The call was abandoned, but traced to a terraced house in Dagmar Road, Islington, where the four bodies were found in the front room.

Although a knife had been recovered, he said the results of the post-mortem examinations had yet to be completed.

The victims were named as John Trant, 71, his wife, Vivien, 57, their daughter, Sophia Aderdour, and her baby daughter, Amina. All had been stabbed.

Mrs Aderdour was a midwife at the Whittington Hospital, Archway, north London. However, she had been recently working at St Thomas's hospital in Lambeth. It is understood that she used to live with her husband in a flat near her parents' home, and that Mrs Trant looked after Amina when her mother was at work. However, the couple recently separated and Mrs Aderdour is thought to have moved in with her parents.

Mr and Mrs Trant worked as travel guides escorting tourists around London and parts of south-east England. Neighbours in the area were still describing their shock and sense of loss over the violent deaths of a well-liked family.

Mr Aderdour came to Britain from Morocco in 1989 and married shortly afterwards. Mr Dale said he was "very anxious" to speak to Mr Aderdour, an unemployed designer, adding: "He might be able to help us."



A police officer outside the house where the bodies were found. Photograph: Graint, Lewis



The victims: John and Vivien Trant (above), who worked a tour guides in and around London; their daughter Vivien Aderdour, a midwife; and her 16-month-old daughter Amina (above right)



### IN BRIEF

#### Two years jail for road-rage driver

A road-rage driver who launched tear gas attacks against two drivers—putting a baby in hospital—was jailed for two and a half years yesterday.

Four-month-old Hannah Ford was in a baby seat in her father's car when she was hit by the tear gas sprayed by 23-year-old Kenneth Taylor, who had chased the family car after being "cut up" at a roundabout in Newport, Gwent. Twenty minutes earlier he had attacked another driver 10 miles away.

Taylor, of Butetown, Cardiff, had denied assault and administering a noxious substance.

#### Boost for LSD case

Legal aid was granted to 56 patients suing health authorities in the West Midlands over continuing side effects caused by treatment with the hallucinogenic drug LSD in hospitals in the 1960s.

#### Wife and lover jailed

A cheating wife and her lover were jailed at the Old Bailey after being convicted of attempting to murder her policeman husband for his £100,000 life insurance. Yvonne Jones, 37, of Elm Park, Essex, received 11 years and 33-year-old Graham Keats, of Dagenham, 13 years for a knife attack on PC Nigel Jones that left him with 10 wounds to the neck and head.

#### Pilot dies in crash

A pilot, Norman Foulds, 52, and his two dogs died when his Cessna aircraft crashed into a hill in mist on the Isle of Man.

#### Road to smell

Workmen were pumping out a huge underground lake of sewage found under a main road in Scarborough, North Yorkshire. Only six inches of concrete was holding up the road when the cavern, caused by leaking pipes, was found.

#### Legal lesson

Andrew Hards, 20, a law student at Exeter university, was awarded £5 damages in the county court after suing college authorities for failing to clean his room after he found mouse droppings. Unfortunately he had turned out a £75 settlement and must pay £18.60 costs.

### THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Belgium	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Canada	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
France	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Germany	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Italy	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Japan	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Netherlands	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Spain	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Sweden	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
Switzerland	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00
USA	£4.40	Weekend	£5.00

### OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

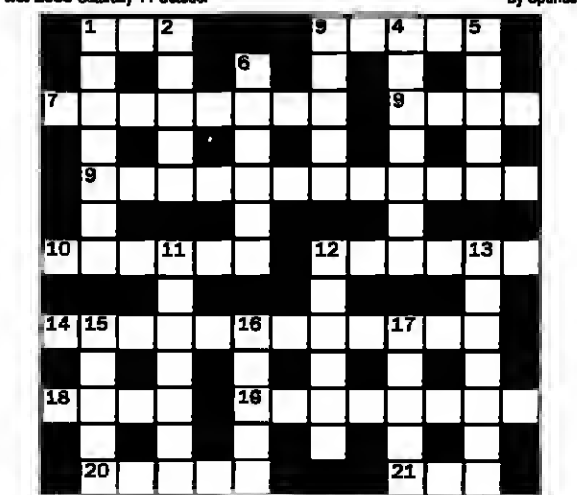
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### BACK ISSUES

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### concise crossword

No. 2895 Saturday 14 October By Spurious

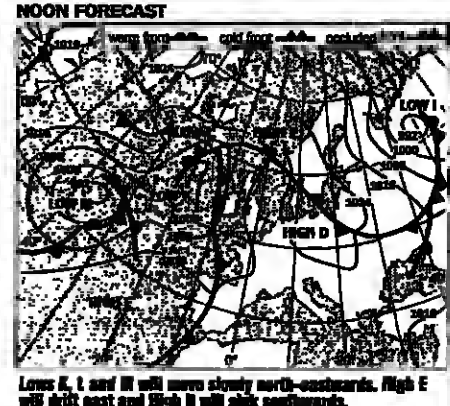


- ACROSS**
- Sardonic (3)
  - Metric weight (5)
  - Recent arrival (8)
  - Attendant (4)
  - Middleman (12)
  - Light (6)
  - Rendered fat (6)
  - Terminology (12)
  - Abominable snowman (4)
  - In detail (8)
  - Cancel (5)
  - Mountain peak (3)
- DOWN**
- Crying (7)
  - Sailing vessel (5)
  - Hebridean isle (5)
  - Relating to marriage (7)
  - Keen (5)
  - Come out (6)
  - Spanish or Portuguese (7)
  - Works out (6)
  - Partially cover (7)
  - Musical entertainment (5)
  - Beast of burden (5)
  - Extremely (5)

**Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:**  
Across: 1 Head, 4 Call (headstart), 5 Harrier, 9 Sogor, 10 Trick, 11 Scraggle, 12 Physiotherapy, 13 Anybody, 17 Risk, 20 Steve, 21 Original, 22 Tint, 23 Scream.  
Down: 1 Harmony, 2 Arts, 3 Surreptitious, 4 Cascade, 5 Legal, 6 Tint, 7 Groovy, 12 Praise, 13 Inspect, 14 Animate, 16 Prate, 18 Trio, 19 Lira

### weather

NOON FORECAST



Low 8, 1 and 11 will move slowly north-eastwards. High 5 will drift west and High 6 will also southwards.

**WORLD WEATHER** (continued from page 1) (continued from page 1) (continued from page 1)

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Paris	10-16	Partly cloudy
Bristol	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Madrid	10-16	Partly cloudy
Birmingham	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Rome	10-16	Partly cloudy
Manchester	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Stockholm	10-16	Partly cloudy
Newcastle	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Helsinki	10-16	Partly cloudy
Glasgow	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Oslo	10-16	Partly cloudy
Belfast	12-18	10-15	Partly cloudy	Reykjavik	10-16	Partly cloudy

**LIGHTING-UP TIMES**

Location	Lighting-up	Lighting-down
London	6.10 pm	7.23 pm
Bristol	6.20 pm	7.33 pm
Birmingham	6.18 pm	7.31 pm
Manchester	6.16 pm	7.29 pm
Newcastle	6.14 pm	7.27 pm
Glasgow	6.20 pm	7.47 pm
Belfast	6.29 pm	7.55 pm

**HIGH TIDES**

Location	High	Low
London	5.57 am	6.8 am
London	5.57 am	6.8 am
London	5.57 am	6.8 am
London	5.57 am	6.8 am
London	5.57 am	6.8 am
London	5.57 am	6.8 am
London	5.57 am	6.8 am

**Out and about with AA Roadwatch**

Call 0330 481777 for the latest road and traffic reports.

Source: The Automobile Association. Data changed at 200 per mile (except 1000 400 per mile (all other areas) see 1000.

**TODAY'S FORECAST:** Scotland will get some bright weather, but with brisk southerly winds while heavy rain spreads from the west. Northern Ireland will also get some rain and gusty southerly winds with showers to follow tonight. England and Wales are going to get some heavy showers after a foggy start, but showers will clear away from the west tonight.

**OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS:** A depression to the west of the British Isles will be pushing north with a cold front moving east across the country in the next 24 hours. The coming week will see the weather in a changeable mood. There will be some sunnier, but with showers and also one or two longer spells of rain, though clearing down to a blue sky. At least which winds blowing from the south-west, it is going to be mild for the time of year.

**WINDS:** Light to moderate from the south-west.

**TEMPERATURES:** 10-16°C.

**MOON:** Waxing gibbous.

**SUN:** Rises 7.22 am, sets 6.10 pm.

**MOON:** Rises 8.32 pm, sets 6.10 pm.

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Nobel Peace Prize: Britain's 86-year-old winner says that he 'started work on the atomic bomb so that it should not be used'

# The man who disowned his brainchild

Keepers of the Cold War peace

TOM WILKIE and STEVE CONNOR

His hair is white and his shoulders slightly stooped with the burden of his 86 years, but his mind, which helped design the first atomic bomb and then revolted against his creation, is as sharp and acute as ever.

Professor Joseph Rotblat, winner of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize, wears an unfashionable brown suit. He lives in an unfashionable suburb of north London, and he has devoted his adult life to an unfashionable cause.

He conducts himself like an elderly academic, with the gentility belonging to an earlier age. But there is an inner steel and a moral integrity that few can rival. He was the world's first anti-nuclear protester, for he walked out on the wartime American Atomic Bomb project before the weapon was complete but when he, and the other atomic scientists knew that Hitler's Germany could never possess nuclear weapons.

Quietly spoken, with a voice which still bears traces of his native Poland, he said yesterday: "I started work on the atomic bomb precisely so that it should not be used. I was afraid that if German scientists got the bomb, Hitler would use it." The Allies had to have the bomb to deter the Nazis from using one, in his view.

But "I did not expect that it would be used, without warning, and against a civilian population. I felt terrible when it was used. Devastated. But I felt angry rather than guilty. The other emotions were worry and fear for the future of our civilisation."

"I knew already in August 1945 that a bomb a thousand times more powerful - a hydrogen bomb - was possible. I knew also that the Soviet Union would use every possible means to develop its own weapon. We

foresaw the arms race."

Born in Warsaw in on 4 November 1908, he was one of Poland's brightest young physicists, who moved to Britain for a one-year research project just before Hitler invaded his motherland. He never saw his wife again. She was among the millions who were killed in the Holocaust.

He first realised the potential power of nuclear fission while working for the Radiological Laboratory in Warsaw and during his subsequent research at Liverpool University in 1939. He wrote in 1985: "My first reflex was to put the whole thing out of my mind, like a person trying to ignore the first symptoms of a fatal disease. But the fear gnaws away all the same. My fear was that someone would put the idea into practice; the thought that I would do it did not occur."

During the war Professor Rotblat joined the British scientists on the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos in New Mexico to build the nuclear bomb. He overheard a chance remark by a US general who said the bomb's real purpose was to subdue the Soviet Union, rather than Germany, and decided to quit the project before it was finished.

The intelligence chief at Los Alamos accused him of being a spy. Rotblat persuaded his superiors this was untrue, but had to agree not to talk to anyone about his real reason for leaving. The official reason given for his departure from the Manhattan Project was that he wanted to return to Europe to search for his missing wife. He was forbidden to contact his former colleagues and was barred from the US until 1964.

Hiroshima changed his scientific life and convinced him that scientists had to take responsibility for the consequences of their endeavours. He abandoned nuclear science for



Change of heart: Professor Joseph Rotblat actively opposed nuclear weapons, despite having taken part in the Manhattan Project

medical physics. He settled in Britain, becoming a UK citizen in 1946, and is now Emeritus Professor of Medical Physics at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. He chose this scientific discipline, because "I wanted to decide for myself how my work would be used."

Rotblat was one of the distinguished scientists, along with Albert Einstein and Linus Pauling, to sign the Bertrand Russell-Einstein manifesto for peace in 1955, which stated: "We have to learn to think in a new way... Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?" Pauling was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his campaigning against atmospheric nuclear tests.

Rotblat became a founder-member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and helped to set up the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs in 1955.

Pugwash is a town in Nova Scotia, the birthplace of Cyrus Eaton, the Canadian industrialist who financed the first meeting at the height of the Cold War.

Rotblat continued his academic work on the medical effects of radiation. He once drank mildly radioactive liquid to prove that not all forms of radiation are necessarily lethal.

He won the Albert Einstein Peace Prize Foundation with physicist Hans Bethe in 1992. Tributes flooded in yesterday for Professor Rotblat's prize. Sir Martin Rees, the Astronomer Royal, said he has won a "substantial reward for his concern over the consequences on nuclear radiation over the past 50 years."

Sir Martin said that in August, Rotblat gave an "inspiring performance" at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, arguing that it is feasible to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely. "He believes it is feasible to go for zero."

Maurice Wilkins, who shared the Nobel prize for the discovery of the DNA double helix, said that Rotblat and the Pugwash group had been tireless campaigners for peace and the award of the Peace Prize was long overdue.

"At a time when there was a frightful Cold War confrontation, Pugwash was one of the few channels of communication between the Russians and the West."

The Polish Foreign Ministry greeted Rotblat's award "with great satisfaction" not just because he helped to bring nuclear disarmament closer but because he "is a son of Polish soil, a graduate of Warsaw University, who today still retains his ties with Poland."

Adam Rotfeld, director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, said the Norwegian Nobel Committee had left it very late to give Pro-

fessor Rotblat the recognition he deserves. "I have asked myself many times why he had not been offered the prize."

Professor Rotblat said the award was "not for me but for the small group of scientists who have been working for 40 years, often against the world's wish to avoid the greatest tragedy that could befall us. For the first time in history it has become technically possible to extinguish the whole human species."

Professor Rotblat is the last surviving signatory of the manifesto against the H-bomb drafted in 1955 by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein.

Eleven scientists signed the manifesto which led to the foundation of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Professor Rotblat served as secretary general from 1957 to 1973 and has been president since 1988.

The group is named after the fishing village of Pugwash in Nova Scotia, Canada. Since 1955, its scientists have made avoidance of nuclear war and war in general their objective.

At the height of the Cold War, Pugwash conferences acted as a diplomatic conduit, and played a crucial role in the disarmament process.

Negotiations on a test-ban treaty in the early 1960s were helped by a joint Soviet-US proposal at a Pugwash conference for seismic monitoring as a means of verification. It has also been suggested that the Cuban missile crisis was resolved by Pugwash scientists who conveyed to Moscow the deal by which the US would remove missiles from Turkey in exchange for the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba.

They are also believed to have played a crucial role in the 1980s during President Reagan's infatuation with "Star Wars".



Rotblat (middle row, centre) with CND campaigners

## Previous British winners of the peace prize

1903: Sir William Ramsay, Nobel Prize for Chemistry. 1917: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1937: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1955: Bertrand Russell and Einstein, Nobel Peace Prize. 1958: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1962: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1968: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1974: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1982: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1985: Lord Balfour, Nobel Prize for Literature. 1995: Joseph Rotblat, Nobel Peace Prize.

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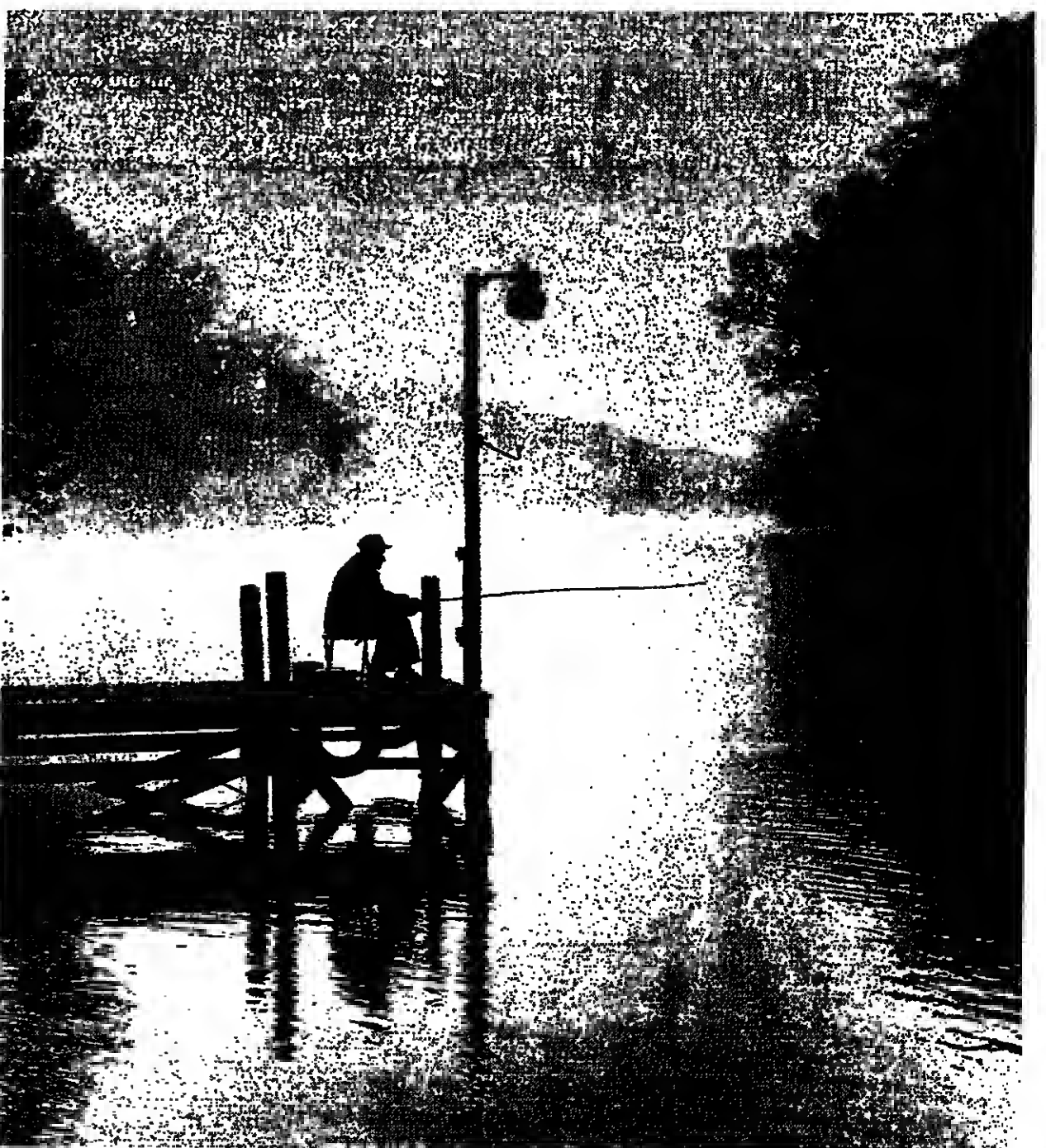
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## TOILES IN BLACKPOOL

Laying down the law: John Major unveils his plans for more town centre surveillance schemes and the first national crime unit



You've been framed: The CCTV control centre of Glasgow police's A Division

Photograph: Jeremy Sutton Hibbert

# Police determined to lead FBI-style force

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

The police are expected to insist on taking charge of the country's first national crime unit, which will include officers from M15, under plans outlined by the Prime Minister yesterday. Mr Major announced that organised crime was a "threat to the state" and that the Government would introduce a Bill this autumn to change the law to allow M15 to become involved in traditional crime fighting for the first time. As predicted exclusively earlier this month in the *Independent*, he also announced that a national FBI-style crime force is to be established to tackle drug traffickers and organised criminals. Although the Government and chief constables have yet to discuss the details of how the force would operate, it is understood that it will involve the expansion of the Home Office-run National Criminal Intelligence Service, which currently can only collect and process information. They will be given an operational wing

drawn from the country's existing six regional crime squads, which deal with serious offences. This will enable the force to target specific criminals, carry out undercover operations and make arrests. M15, the security service, is expected to work alongside NCIS officers in carrying out surveillance and analysing complex data. At first only about 20 of the service's 2,000 staff are expected to take part. The Government's promised crime Bill is expected to amend the 1989 Security Services Act, which restricts M15 to operating only when national security or the economic well being of the country is threatened from abroad. The Bill will allow the security service to work against organised crime, which includes drug dealers. During the forthcoming negotiations, chief constables will argue that NCIS must cut its links with the Home Office and operate as an independent outfit with a police chief in charge. A select unit from the country's 1,500 regional crime squad officers and additional specialist staff from the Met-

**MI5 to take up role as crime-fighter**  
**Britain to get FBI-style crime force**

How the *Independent* broke the story on 22 September and 5 October

ropolitan Police would be attached to NCIS. The current national co-ordinator of the regional crime squads would play a leading role. Customs and Excise, M16 and GCHQ would continue to provide information and intelligence on organised crime. Jim Sharpley, the president of the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Chief Constable of Merseyside, yesterday welcomed the inclusion of M15 in the fight against organised

crime, but added: "We have always said that any agencies involved must have a proper legal framework and must be accountable and transparent. We are very pleased, therefore, that there is a commitment for legislation to put the security services on a proper legal footing." He said the police did not object to M15 agents continuing to give evidence during trials behind screens to protect their identity. Civil rights campaigners argued that this could lead to miscarriages of justice. M15's director general, Stella Rimington, has been lobbying for her organisation to be allowed to join the fight against organised crime ever since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the terrorist ceasefires in Northern Ireland. A security source said yesterday: "It's adding support to law enforcement agencies. There is no question of primacy. Nevertheless, police chiefs are treating the M15's new involvement very cautiously and will seek to ensure they retain control of traditional crime-fighting."

## Promises on cameras and patrols likely to be broken

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

The Prime Minister's pledge to provide an extra 5,000 police officers to walk the beat and 10,000 more surveillance cameras are extremely unlikely to be fulfilled, government figures suggest. His two law and order initiatives received enthusiastic responses from the Tory delegates and undignified joy from the police. But a detailed breakdown of the funding suggests that neither scheme will deliver the hoped-for impact. Responding to the public's growing desire for more police on patrol, Mr Major said he was going to increase the current total of nearly 130,000 officers in England and Wales by 5,000 over the next three years. To pay for the rise he has promised to add £100m to the annual police budget of £6.4bn. The extra money would pay

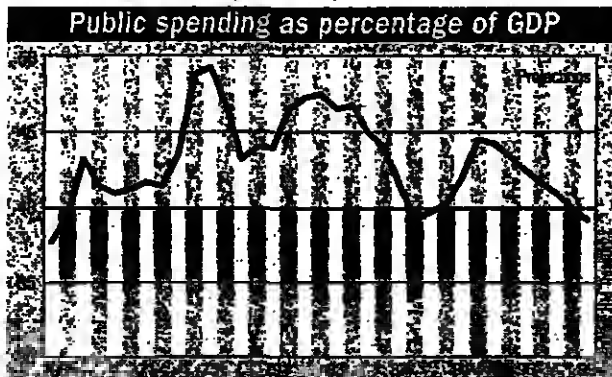
for 5,000 police constables, earning about £20,000 each a year, but it does not take into account the cost of training and equipment or inflation. It is also extremely unlikely that chief constables will spend all the money on patrol officers. Many forces have had to make cuts in services and equipment and are under-resourced in areas such as civilian staff. Jack Straw, Labour's shadow Home Secretary said "We will believe his promise to provide more police officers and CCTV cameras when we see it." The announcement that an extra 10,000 closed-circuit televisions are to be installed in town centres around the country follows the success of cameras in reducing crime. Research in Newcastle upon Tyne showed there were significant falls in various kinds of crime in the city centre area covered by the network of 16 cameras. Newcastle police claim that

in the three years since the cameras were fitted there had been 6,000 fewer victims than might have been predicted. But critics believe the use of CCTV to cut crime is still unproven and may just displace offences. There is also concern about civil liberties, highlighted by the disclosure last week that a businessman intends to use clips of violent assaults taken on CCTV on a video which will be sold as entertainment. It is unclear how new cameras will be paid for. The Home Office expects to get £20m over three years to pay for the initiative. In a similar scheme last year the Home Secretary provided £5m to help partnerships install CCTV nationwide. This money brought in £13.8m of funding from private firms and councils but only provided about 1,000 cameras. With just four times the money, the Government will need to get 10 times the equipment.

## New spending adds to tax-cut dilemma

PAUL WALLACE  
Economics Editor

John Major may have enjoyed winning the acclaim of the conference delegates with his pledge of a return to the tax-cutting trail. Now comes the hard bit: making the sums add up. It will not be easy. The clearest direct proposal to cut spending was made by Peter Lilley, with his crackdown on asylum seekers, estimated to save £200m. But that reduction was more than outweighed by commitments for extra spending. Andrew Smith, shadow Chief Secretary, was quick to pounce on the potential cost, saying that the total cost of 5,000 more policemen, doubling the assisted places scheme, the 10,000 extra closed-circuit cameras together with the nursery voucher scheme for four-year olds would add up to £500m. As if that was not enough, Mr Clarke's teases about a Budget he was looking forward to delivering, came on a day in which higher inflation pushed the cost of the social security budget next year up by £650m more than the Treasury had reckoned at the time of the last Budget. Half a billion here, half a billion there and you are talking big money. If the Treasury's plans for spending next year were more realistic, then the Chancellor might be able to absorb such extra calls for funds from the reserve he keeps in hand for unbudgeted expenditure. At £6bn, he has a lot to play with.



But to take one key claimant, the health department's budget is shown as falling in real terms in 1996-97 by £0.5bn, despite the Tories' pledge to keep increasing health spending in real money. Between 1989-90 and 1994-95, the department's budget rose on average by £1.3bn a year - surely a more likely outcome next year after the run-in over the summer with the nurses and midwives. Or take education, an area singled out by Mr Major as a priority. The 1 per cent real increase in education spending to local authority-controlled schools this year fell short of the pay award of 2.7 per cent given to teachers. Certainly, scepticism rules in the City about the Government's ability to make real spending cuts next year. The historical precedents are telling: in the year preceding each of the last three elections, real government spending has jumped

by more than its long-term average rate of growth. None of which will prevent the Chancellor from cutting the all-important income tax next year. By judging the spending round, allowing the PSBR to rise by more than had been planned and switching the burden of taxation to the corporate sector, he will find the resources to cut income tax. Whether he can afford to abolish capital gains tax and inheritance tax - a prospect held out by Mr Major - is more questionable. Inheritance tax will raise £1.5bn this year and CGT pulls in just under £1bn. As for Mr Major's commitment to reduce public spending as a percentage of national output below 40 per cent, that has only been achieved since the Conservatives took office in 1979 in just two years - and then by running the economy hugely above capacity. The jury remains out.

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## TORIES IN BLACKPOOL

# Major prepares party for 'the fight of our lives'

STEPHEN GOODWIN  
Parliamentary Correspondent

John Major yesterday declared the Tory party healed and hungry for a fifth term in office. He told the conference that millions of voters had still to make up their minds and set out to attract them with the prospect of tax cuts and a pledge of more police officers.

Mr Major said the share of the nation's wealth taken by public expenditure had to be cut to below 40 per cent of GNP and promised to double the assisted places scheme under which a limited number of bright children from less well-off homes get help to go to a private school.

"Our hopes for our country are not tired. Our ambitions are not dimmed," the Prime Minister said at the close of a speech lasting 70 minutes. "We stand for a wise and kindly way of life that is rooted deep in our history."

If Labour was beaten one more time, he said, socialism would have been driven out of Britain for good. Whoever won the next election would inherit the strongest economy for decades. "We built that economy. It wasn't easy... and I'm not in the mood to hand it over to any other party to wreck after all that... so we're going to mount the fight of our lives."

The road to hell was paved with Labour's good intentions. The Social Chapter would clobber businesses, the minimum wage would destroy jobs and unions would be given privileges

that even Michael Foot had not dreamt of in the 1970s.

In the briefest of references, Mr Major said that the Liberal Democrats supported all of Labour's "nonsense". But it did not matter. "As we saw the other day, they're the only party in British political history that has had its entire battle plans wiped clean off the media by a goldfish - my goldfish."

The millennium would bring shifts in world power, more competition, furious changes in technology and, even with growing wealth, more welfare problems. The state could not do everything. "We should help individuals shape their own future. Help them - but not nanny them. Conservatism is choice. Choice is liberty - we should offer choice whenever we can, with every policy we devise."

"But if there's one thing in our Tory tradition that has inspired me, that helped bring me into this party, it's our historic recognition that not everyone is thrusting and confident and fit. Many are not, and they deserve our protection."

Mr Major said that in the recession, taxes had had to be raised to protect the vulnerable. "Now the recession is over, and as soon as prudent but not before, we must get taxes down again. I don't only mean income tax. I mean the taxes that damage investment and stultify wealth creation." Inheritance and capital gains tax had to be cut and ultimately abolished.

The Prime Minister drew loud applause for a personal commitment to small business-

es. They were the route to more jobs, he said. "When I was a small boy, my bread and butter was paid for by my father's small business. He made garden ornaments 40 years ago and some people find that rather humorous. I don't. I see the proud, stubborn, independent old man I loved who ran the firm and taught me to love my country, fight for my own and spit in the eye of malign fate."

The party faithful were similarly delighted by his forthright rejection of a federal Europe. "Often in the watches of the night I have pondered the choices. But federalism wouldn't work for us. Our partners must understand that it is politically and constitutionally unacceptable." Britain had entered Europe for prosperity, for co-operation, for a louder voice, not for a new tier of government. "If others go federalist, Conservative Britain will not."

Turning to education, Mr Major said it remained top of his agenda. He announced the doubling of the assisted places scheme, which currently helps 37,000 children, and an aim of enabling all schools to become grant-maintained. The message from Labour, he said, was "no choice for the poor".

Mr Major told the story of a Victoria Cross holder without a ticket for the VI Day celebrations, ending with the announcement that the £100 annuity paid to holders of the VC and George Cross is to be uprated to £1,300 - "to show that this country has not forgotten the bravest of the brave".



Big hand: John Major, surrounded by ministers, acknowledges the applause after his conference speech yesterday

Photograph: Brian Harris

He recommitted himself to a permanent peace in Northern Ireland and to the union with Scotland. "It is my duty as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to warn of the effect of Labour's plans for the constitution. The constitution is

the core, the heart and the guts of the way of life in the United Kingdom... Labour are proposing changes to our constitution for their own party political advantage."

Concluding with a forceful passage on crime, he promised

5,000 more police officers on the beat, 10,000 more closed-circuit TV cameras in town centres, a national squad to fight organised crime, and a Bill to enable MIS to support the police.

In an age when children were more likely to be killed by a drug

dealer than by an enemy missile, it was absurd that the law restricted MIS to combating espionage and terrorism, he said.

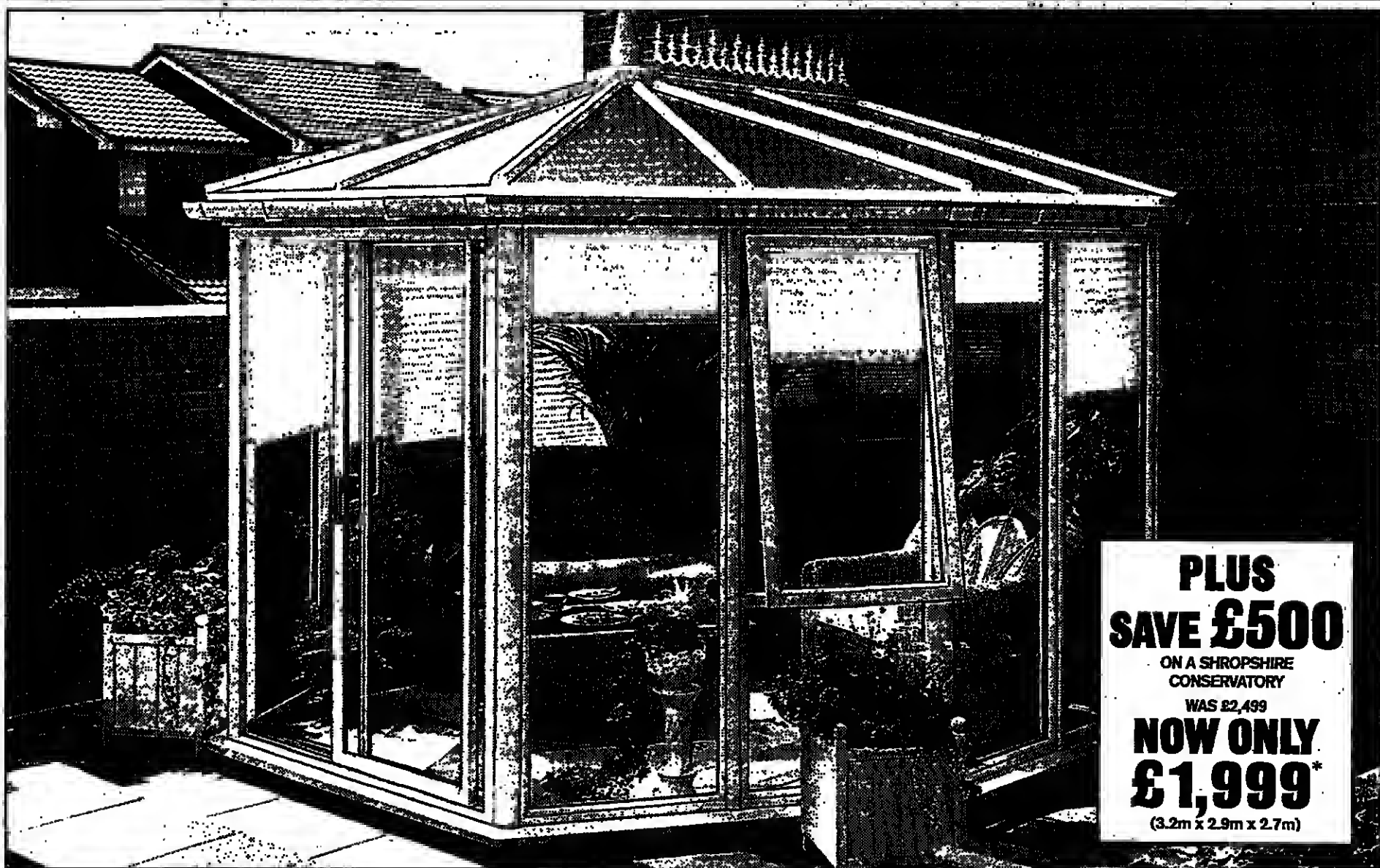
Trying to reclaim the law-and-order initiative from the Labour Party, he said the Government was going to hit crime harder

and harder and stand up for people in Britain's inner cities.

Bringing the audience to its feet, Mr Major said the Tories were building the greatest success for the nation in a lifetime. "We will not surrender them to a lightweight alternative."

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## Smug speeches, pat sound-bites and a lot of balls

Labour did its best for Tony Blair last week, but it still has a lot to learn about stage managing a leader's speech.

John Major, like Blair, is not in the same league of public pleasers as Michael Heseltine; Leyton Orient to his Liverpool. But, to paraphrase Joe Cocker, who has soundtracked this conference with his dreary *Officer and a Gentleman* theme, yesterday Mr Major got by with a lot of help from his friends. His pals were out in force in the morning, filling the hall in Blackpool with Union Jacks, long before the Prime Minister had even left his hotel. One man wandered the aisles wrapped in the flag in the manner of a low-rent football job, seeking out photographers, anxious to get himself in the morning's papers.

Up on the platform, the Cabinet, too, lined up as you would expect: Riffkind, Dorrell and Clarke to the left of where he would stand; Howard, Lilley and Portillo to the right. After fifteen minutes of waiting, the video screen above their heads came alive, presenting a package of conference highlights.

Smug speeches, self-righteous delegates, pat sound-bites: no one could accuse Conservative Central Office of presenting an inaccurate summation of the past week. And then Mr Major appeared, with Norma at his side, at the top of a set of Busby Berkeley steps which had replaced the vast proscenium which had been there all week. He waddled down and stood behind a lectern, as if reading the lesson in his parish church. It was a shrewd move, immediately making him more human, more relaxed, more in touch than the automaton nodding and clapping up on the over-sized set behind him. But not more funny.

As a comedian, John Major is still-born. Merely saying the words "Humphrey the Cat" is not the same as saying something funny about Humphrey the Cat. And as for the passage about Tony Blair having the



JIM WHITE

same name as George Orwell (aka Eric Blair), but not yet changing it like Orwell did, though he has changed everything else; there was only one verdict: balls. Major-Balls, actually. Fortunately, his speech-writing friends didn't linger on the gags. Their theme was substance. "I am sick of policy by sound-bite," Major trilled. Well, I think that's what he said, it was not on the lists of "key quotes for media" handed out by the Conservative briefing unit an hour before the speech.

Also humanity, Major wiping away a tear, as he spoke about how much he loved his old dad, Mr Major-Ball. It was a good speech: not a blood-curdler, but warm, humane and thus a first for the week. It lasted 70 minutes, was interrupted by 74 bursts of applause, and at the finish he stood surrounded on the steps by the Cabinet; his friends - the Cambridge mafia Shepherd, Clarke, Gummer - at the front, Michael Portillo at the back, on the top step. From where, incidentally, everyone got a full view of the great new patriot failing abjectly to join in the singing of "Land of Hope and Glory".

Then Major plunged into the crowd, to shake hands, accept plaudits and remind Labour of his flesh-and-blood strength. Norma went with him and Brian Mawhinney too. As he passed where I was standing, submerged in a sea of flag-wavers, he looked as though he had lost his bearings completely. "Which way now?" he said. "Left, left, left, Prime Minister," ordered Mawhinney, proving, as he did last June when Major was assaulted by malevolent aliens, a friend in need.

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# Wests 'seemed happier' after girl vanished

WILL BENNETT

Rosemary and Frederick West seemed very happy the day after Cromwell Street lodger Shirley Robinson, who was pregnant by Mr West, disappeared. Winchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

They claimed that 18-year-old Shirley, who had said that she had become frightened of them, had gone to live in Germany. They later said they were keeping in touch with her and that her baby had been born.

The remains of Shirley, who disappeared in May 1978, and those of her unborn child, were found at the Wests' home in Cromwell Street when a murder inquiry began 16 years later.

Details of Shirley's last known movements were given to the court yesterday by Elizabeth Brewer, a friend and fellow lodger at 25 Cromwell Street, who shared her bedroom there with Shirley for a time.

She was giving evidence at the trial of Mrs West, 41, who denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at Cromwell Street and at the Wests' previous home in Gloucester. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on 1 January this year.

Mrs Brewer said she had let Shirley use her bed while she slept on the couch, because Shirley was pregnant and had told her that "things had become strained with the Wests".

She said: "Shirley was becoming very emotional about Mr West. She was frightened of the Wests and she wanted to keep away from them. She wanted to stay in my room."

One day Mrs Brewer went to meet some friends. She said: "I asked Shirley if she wanted to come along but she was far too tired. She was about eight months pregnant at the time."

When Mrs Brewer returned that afternoon, Shirley had gone and she thought that she might have patched up her relationship with the Wests and moved out of the bedroom.



Elizabeth Brewer: Shared a room with Shirley

The next morning, she met the Wests at the bottom of the stairs. Mr West told her that Shirley had left partly because she was visiting relatives in Germany and also because she had been fantasising about lesbian sex with Mrs Brewer.

Mrs Brewer said: "Mrs West was looking over his shoulder nodding and agreeing with everything he was saying. They appeared very happy."

Brian Leveson QC, for the prosecution, asked who had been at the house the day Shirley vanished. Mrs Brewer replied: "I think the two other lodgers worked but I can't be certain about that. I think that Mr West would have been at work and the Wests' children would be at school."

Mr Leveson asked: "Who looked after the little children?" Mrs Brewer replied: "Mrs West." She added that she could not recall Mrs West ever going out in the daytime, although she did in the evenings.

Mrs Brewer said: "I was led to believe that they were keeping in touch with Shirley in Germany and I would often ask if she had had the baby. They said yes and that it was a baby boy and she had called him Barry."

She was told that Shirley was planning to return to 25 Cromwell Street and that Mrs West was going to look after the baby.

During cross examination by Richard Ferguson QC, defending, Mrs Brewer said that both Shirley and Mr West had told her that Mrs West was jealous because the girl was expecting his baby.

She said that when Mr West told her that Shirley had had lesbian sexual fantasies about her, "I almost felt glad that she had gone".

Mrs Brewer admitted that she had signed a £10,000 contract with a newspaper for her story.

Jane Bayle, a cousin of Mrs Brewer, who used to visit 25 Cromwell Street, told the court that Shirley had slept in the Wests' joint bedroom for a time. She said: "She was having a sexual relationship with both of them."

Claire Rigby, another lodger at Cromwell Street, said that about a week or two after Shirley disappeared, she saw Mrs West bundling clothes into bags in the missing girl's own bedroom. She presumed that the clothes were Shirley's.

Health records read to the jury showed that Shirley had had a positive pregnancy test on 18 October, 1977 and that the child was due to be born about 11 June, 1978. She was last seen at the health centre on 2 May, 1978.

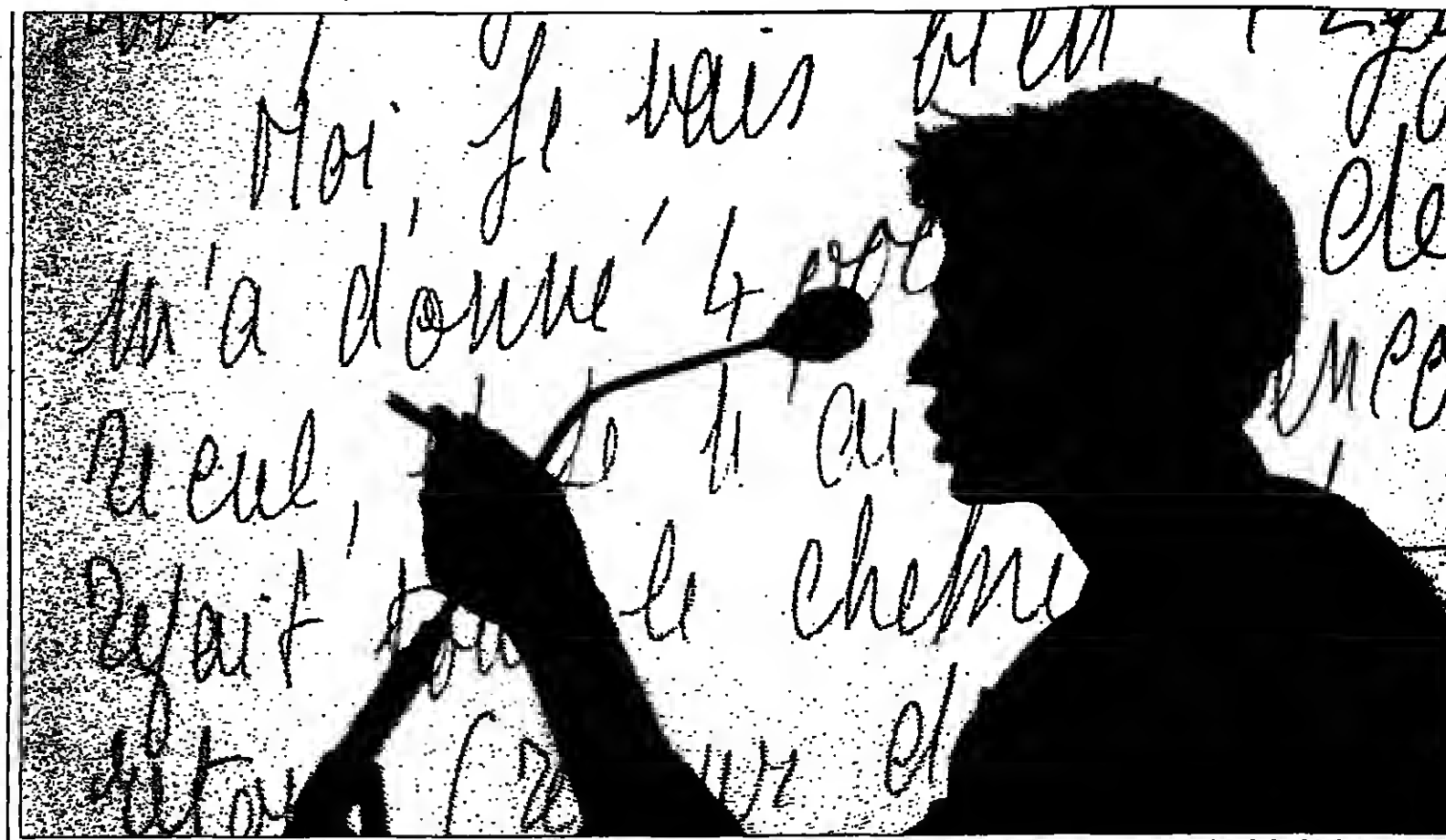
Gillian Britt, who also lived

at 25 Cromwell Street, told the court that she met Alison Chambers at the Cromwell Street house in the summer of 1979. Alison's remains were found at the house.

Alison, 16, absconded from the Jordansbrook children's home in Gloucester on 5 August, 1979 and was never seen again. She was a rebellious girl from a broken home who had arrived at Jordansbrook in late 1978.

Enys Davies, a worker at the home, said in a statement that Alison was an intelligent girl prone to exaggeration and was so insecure that she wanted constant attention.

The case was adjourned until Monday.



Writing on the wall: A speaker addressing the 10th World Congress on Graphology at the Park Lane Hotel, London, yesterday. It is the first time the event has been held in Britain and handwriting experts hope it will help to promote understanding of their 'science' Photograph: David Sandison



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## Council to sack all staff in pay cut manoeuvre

BARRIE CLEMENT  
Labour Editor

The drive to cut costs in local government has reached a new intensity with Labour-controlled Coventry City Council threatening to dismiss its 17,000 staff and re-employ them on reduced terms and conditions.

Unions have been told that the West Midlands authority wants to achieve more than £20m of savings over the next three years by cutting pay and holiday entitlement rather than services or jobs. The lowest paid will be hit hardest with many losing around £500 a year, according to union officials.

The news follows the Prime Minister's pledge to the Conservative Party conference that the Government would be "ruthless" in seeking future savings in public expenditure.

Officials at Unison, the public service union, said yesterday that while tight restrictions on budgets had caused serious problems for councils throughout Britain, Coventry was the first to threaten to impose new contracts on employees by first dismissing them.

Local authorities have been told by ministers to restrict expenditure increases this year to 0.5 per cent at a time when inflation is nearly 4 per cent.

Coventry has given its employees three months' notice from 31 December of the new pay and conditions. Hugh Robertson, national official of Unison, described the decision

as "outrageous". He said a 12-point plan from management had "come out of the blue" and council representatives had said it was not up for negotiation.

Tricia Davis, head of local government for Unison in the West Midlands, called for an independent report on the council's finances. She said the union planned to make a series of proposals for reducing spending which would avoid the need to undermine pay and conditions.

John McNicholas, the Labour councillor responsible for human resources at the council, said that the lowest rates earned by council employees - £3.71 an hour - compared favourably with the private sector. He said the council would not be reducing pay and conditions below nationally agreed levels and hoped to arrive at a negotiated settlement.

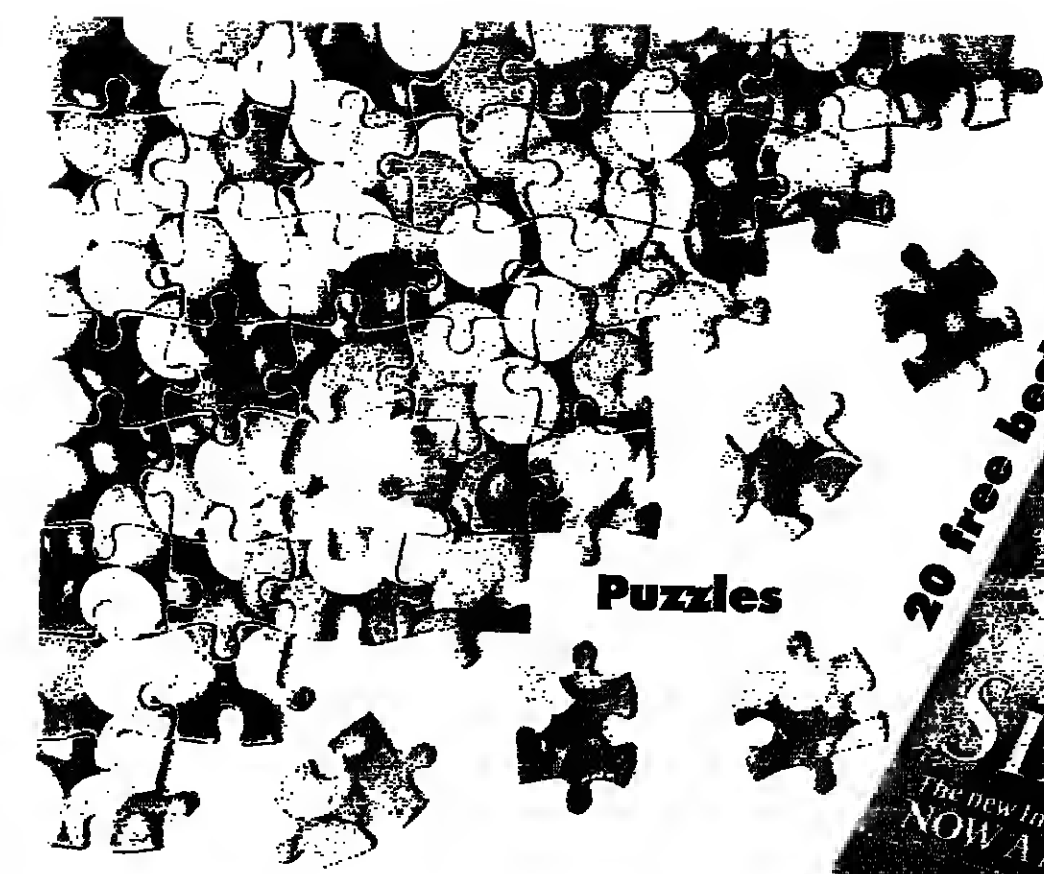
He said the threat of dismissal was a "technicality". Management could only introduce new contracts of employment by giving due notice, dismissing employees and then immediately reinstating them.

Mr Robertson said other local authorities had faced serious financial problems but none had so far reacted with such "draconian" measures.

Paul Marwood of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said that strict government financial policies had forced cutbacks on local authorities. Savings had been made in many areas, but some councils were now being forced to look at pay and conditions.

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طاعة من الامم



Defence of the realm: Shortage of fighting fit young recruits may force Army chiefs to bring in legendary colonial regiment

## Gurkhas on alert to bolster Paras' depleted infantry

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

The Army is considering using the Gurkhas, its feared soldiers recruited in the mountains of Nepal, to fill gaps in the ranks of British infantry, and in particular the Parachute Regiment.

Britain's infantry regiments, which should total 24,000 soldiers, are short of 1,200 front-line fighting men. As the *Independent* on Sunday revealed last week, the Paras, who are 12 per cent under strength, have a particular problem. Youngsters are not as fit as they used to be, and therefore fewer pass the rigorous selection tests.

But the Paras may not like the solution - because the wiry Nepalese are tougher than they are, and do better in the punishing 'P' Company tests, as their physique is ideal for carrying heavy loads for long distances at speed, and they have a good head for heights.

Army sources yesterday said the proposal to use soldiers from the 4,000-strong Brigade of Gurkhas was "an idea floating around the Ministry of Defence", but it makes good sense. The idea is to attach platoons (about 30 soldiers each) or companies (130 soldiers) of

Gurkhas to bring British infantry battalions (about 650 soldiers) up to strength.

Unlike the other infantry regiments of the British Army, the Gurkhas have no recruiting problem: to serve in the regiment, which has been part of the British Army since 1815, is regarded as a great honour and there are hundreds of applicants for every place. But the Gurkhas' survival has been in doubt, especially in view of the imminent British withdrawal from Hong Kong. To use the Gurkhas to fill gaps in the rest of the infantry would be logical. The Gurkhas surpass the most exacting physical standards - those of the Parachute Regiment - and there were Gurkha parachute units during the Second World War.

There are currently three Gurkha battalions: one in Britain, at Church Crookham in Hampshire, one in Brunel and one in Hong Kong. There are also Gurkha Transport, Signals and Engineer regiments. The Transport Regiment is serving in Bosnia.

Next year the second and third battalions will amalgamate to form 2nd Battalion, the Royal Gurkha Rifles, leaving only two infantry battalions,

both of which will be based in Britain when Hong Kong returns to Chinese rule. By that time the Gurkhas will have shrunk from their present strength of 4,000 to 2,500.

Dr David Clark, the Labour defence spokesman, yesterday accused the Government of "mismanaging" the armed forces, resulting in the shortage of front line infantry. Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, invoked the motto of the SAS - "who dares wins" - at the party conference this week. But it appears it is not the SAS who are coming to his rescue. It is the Gurkhas, motto "Kaphar hannu bhanda marmu ramro" - "better to die than be a coward".



Members of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Gurkha Rifles, on parade at Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Aldershot, yesterday Photograph: Philip Meech

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## Escape inquiry puts blame on Prison Service

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

A damning inquiry into the escape of three high-risk prisoners from Parkhurst jail will blame all levels of the Prison Service from Derek Lewis, the director general, down to officers at the jail itself.

The report, to be published next week concludes: "The numerous failures indicate there were many hands on the tiller on this voyage to disaster. This is not due to one person's folly because many of the ingredients can be traced along lines of communication to the Prison Service headquarters."

The *Independent* has learnt that the inquiry into the escape in January of two killers and an arsonist, who remained at large for almost a week, identifies a catalogue of failure at the jail - drug and alcohol abuse, poor search procedures, poor management and the appeasement of inmates in return for an easier life for staff.

However, it has also concluded that the then governor, John Marriott - who was removed from his duties after the escape and is now about to retire - was snowed under by bureaucracy. He was dealing with 60 hours of paperwork a week, making "governing" almost impossible.

Crucially, it notes that Mr Marriott's warning of a possible escape had gone unheeded by Prison Service headquar-

ters. He had even predicted the most likely escape route.

Headquarters repeatedly turned down his and previous governors' "persistent and legitimate" requests for electronic perimeter sensors, high-intensity lighting, extra cameras and guard dogs - common to all other top-security jails. Had they been installed - at a cost of about £420,000 - the escape would not have succeeded, it concludes.

The report by Sir John Learmonth, the former Army Quartermaster General, also concludes that high-risk prisoners should not have been held in the jail at the time of the escape because it was undergoing major refurbishment. "It is quite extraordinary that so much effort was invested in persuading the Parkhurst management to continue to accept Category A prisoners, including high risks, whilst doing so little in ensuring tried and tested security technology was installed as the result of persistent and legitimate requests," it says.

Sir John was particularly concerned at the amount of goods and money inmates were allowed to accrue. When two inmates were moved to another jail, it cost £466 to move all their belongings. The removal of 20 other prisoners on another occasion, involved moving £26,000 in bank accounts.

The main recommendation of the report is for a super-secure prison to hold all the country's most dangerous prisoners. It will also propose weekend prisons, enabling less serious offenders to keep their jobs but to be locked up in their free time.

Sir John will also recommend that jails are run by the state, not the private sector and that Prison Service headquarters be cut right back.

David Roddan, of the Prison Governors' Association, said yesterday Sir John's criticisms indicated that the removal of Mr Marriott was "at best made in panic, at worse vindictive".



Sir John Learmonth: Concerned

## Leeson closes £450,000 deal for his memoirs

Nick Leeson, the rogue bank trader, yesterday sold his story of the £860 million collapse of Barings Bank for a reported £450,000.

Philippa Harrison, managing director of Little Brown UK, which bought the memoirs, said they were "full of revelations" and likely to embarrass a number of people.

Fred Newman, editor of *Publishing News*, said he understood Little Brown had won the auction with a bid of about £450,000, and he estimated that worldwide book rights alone might make £1m.

Ms Harrison said: "Nick Leeson's manuscript about his last two years is the most compul-

sively readable story I've seen for many years. The son of a plasterer who... got involved in a greater gambling binge than any fiction writer could imagine in their wildest dreams."

Ms Harrison said Mr Leeson named names in the book, which is being written in collaboration with a journalist and former banker, Edward Whitley, and is about half-finished.

"It's the most fast-reading, exciting story that you could imagine, and it's full of revelations. It hasn't been read by lawyers yet," she said, speaking at the Frankfurt Book Fair, just miles from the jail where Mr Leeson, 28, is being held pending extradition to Singapore.



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## news

## Interest grows in 'new' cures

GLENDA COOPER

One in four Scottish GPs has already taken a "crash course" in complementary medicine in response to demand from patients, the Ciba Foundation on complementary therapies was told yesterday.

And of 700 Glasgow medical students questioned, nearly four-fifths said they wanted complementary medicine, which includes homeopathy and acupuncture, to be part of an undergraduate curriculum. Dr David Reilly, consultant physician at Glasgow Homeopathy hospital, said:

"But medical schools had not shifted in line with public interest, leaving doctors out of touch with such methods. Their feelings were summed up in one sentence: 'Our patients know more than we do'."

Professor Edward Ernst, from the Centre for Complementary Health Studies at Exeter

University, said UK medical schools believed in teaching what students needed to know rather than what they wanted to know.

In the US, by contrast, between 25 and 30 medical schools out of a total of 140 now taught complementary medicine. Dr Ted Kaptchuk, of the Center for Alternative Medicine Research, Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard, added: "The UK is usually ahead in education but for some curious reason research [in complementary medicine] in the US is ahead of the UK."

In 1991-92, the NHS spent an estimated £1m on complementary medicine out of a total budget of £37bn. Dr Adrian White, also from Exeter's Centre for Complementary Health, said that the public themselves spent between £500m and £1bn.

However, he warned: "An acupuncture needle may cost the same as a painkiller, but one has to bear in mind that consultations can take six times as long and patients may have to attend 10 times as frequently."

## Conservation clash: Cash windfall for hydro-electricity behind threat to protected areas



Water world: The remains of a dam that provided water for the original hydro-electric station at Cwm Croesor, in Snowdonia

Photograph: Steven Peake

## National Park in fight to dam rise of water power

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

Plans are being drawn up to build a hydro-electric power station in the shadow of Cnicht mountain, dubbed the Welsh Matterhorn, in spite of local objections and concern from the Snowdonia National Park.

Agents working for the Brandanw estate, whose creator, Clough Williams Ellis, built the village of Portmeirion, in Gwynedd, have been holding talks with the National Park about the project to tap the water of the river Croesor.

The increasing number of such approaches are causing concern. To date, more than 20 developers and landowners have inquired about setting up hydro-electric schemes on 35 rivers in the region.

The risk to develop has been sparked by government legislation. The electricity companies are forced to produce a percentage of their energy from non-fossil fuels. A premium is paid to those who supply it. Small hydro-electricity generating stations provide a minuscule source of power but generate a great deal of wealth for those involved.

Strict planning conditions are being imposed by the National Park authority anxious at the environmental damage that

may be caused. But the proposal by the Brandanw estate may prove hard to resist.

Hydro-electricity has been generated here in the past. Before the First World War a dam was built above Croesor to form Llyn Cwm Y Foel and a hydro-electricity station ran a 30-horsepower locomotive and the lights and equipment at a slate quarry. The power station and quarry have gone but the lake remains, though the dam has been lowered.

Dr Rod Gritten, an ecologist working for the National Park who lives in the Croesor valley, said: "These schemes are damaging to an important habitat in a beautiful part of the world in order to produce a pittance of electricity and to make good money for private companies."

"Rather than keep dealing with a flood of individual applications we would rather the Government chose something else to spend its money on. These schemes are viable only because the Government wants to be seen to be being green."

He said the Brandanw estate, advised by a developer, had originally considered damming three rivers. "As a local I was very concerned because two of the rivers are very beautiful and are important for salmon and trout. However, assurances

have been given that plans to develop on these two rivers have been dropped."

A villager in Croesor said many locals took a fatalistic view about the development. "If it happens, it happens," one farmer said. But he wanted the power project scrapped. "Having lived in the area for many years, all of a sudden somebody decides they want to make money. They don't live here and have no interest in the valley apart from their profits."

The National Park has published a policy requiring all pipelines to be buried with no damage to the landscape or water courses. But planning officers believe this latest proposal could have a chance of success.

Gareth Lloyd, a senior planning officer with the National Park, said one difficulty was the history of hydro-electric schemes in Snowdonia. Two large operations date back to the 1920s.

Mr Lloyd said the National Park had a policy of limiting power stations to under five megawatts with restrictions on making works as unobtrusive as possible. "It could well be the conditions will make the power station unviable," he said.

Nobody from the Brandanw estate's agents was available to comment yesterday.

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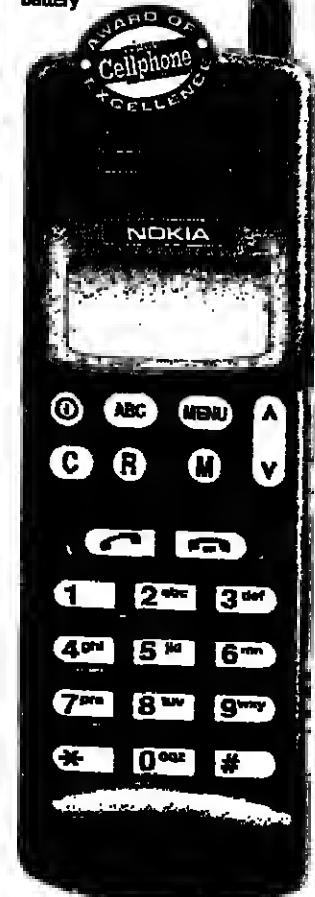
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مكتبة من الامم



Skinheads in Germany's worst racist attack since the war are sentenced to at least 10 years, writes Imre Karacs

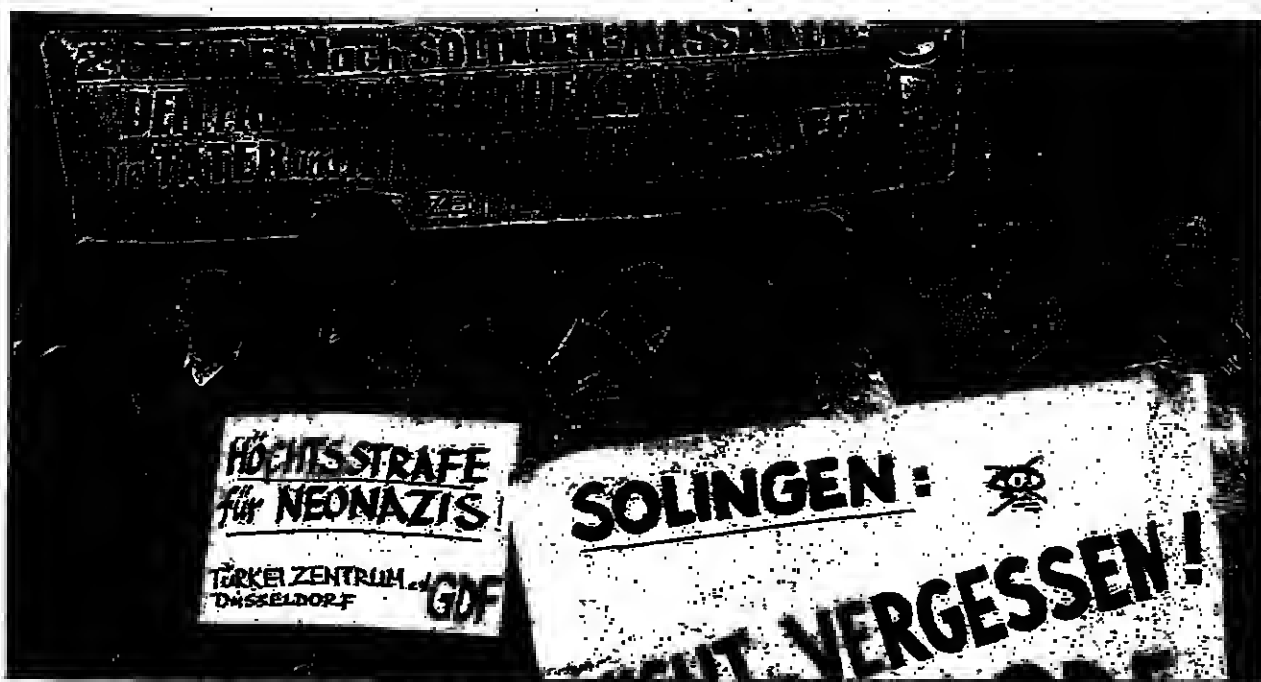
# Neo-Nazis who killed five Turks are jailed

Bonn — A German court yesterday meted out stiff sentences to four skinheads convicted of carrying out what is regarded as the country's worst racist attack since the war. The torching of an immigrant house in Solingen two years ago cost the lives of two women and three girls from a Turkish family, and sparked furious protests worldwide.

Three of those jailed, regarded as juveniles under the law, received the maximum 10 years, but the fourth defendant, who had faced life imprisonment, was given a 15-year sentence. That provoked renewed accusations that the courts remain soft on racist crime.

"The sentences show that Germany has not learned from its fascist Hitler past," complained Suez Kolsuz, one of 200 Turks who had gathered outside the court in Düsseldorf to hear the verdict. "The judges should have sent out a signal that xenophobia and the murder of foreigners cannot go without proper punishment," said Kemal Kircan, chairman of a local Turkish organisation.

But throughout the 18-month trial, the prosecution's efforts to obtain maximum punishment were hampered by the lack of direct evidence. Their case rested on the testimony of two of the accused: Markus Gattmann, now 25, and Christian Reher, 19. But Gattmann, who at one point in the trial



Demonstrators gather outside the court in Düsseldorf yesterday to hear the verdict, left, and, right, the burnt-out remains of the house in Solingen where the Turks were killed

said: "I am infinitely ashamed of what we did," later retracted his confession, and Reher maintained he had acted alone. Reher gave a Nazi salute as he was being driven away after the sentencing.

Police failed to obtain physical evidence from the ruins of the house, and there were allegations from the defendants that the confessions had been ob-

tained under duress. Gattmann contended at one point that the police had threatened to lock him up in a cell with Turks.

The two other defendants, Felix Köhnen, now 18, and Christian Buchholz, 22, pleaded not guilty throughout. "You swine, I am innocent," Köhnen shouted at the chief judge, Wolfgang Steffen, as the sentences were announced.

The house at number 81 Untere Wernerstrasse in Solingen, a nondescript industrial town near Cologne, no longer stands.

Only a small memorial nearby remains to testify to the horrors of the night two years ago when the house of the Genç family was consumed by the flames of racial hatred.

Although arguments about yesterday's verdict will go on —

the three juveniles are appealing against the sentence — the basic facts are beyond dispute. All Germans accept that what happened in Solingen on the night of 29 May 1993 was the manifestation of a latent xenophobia which, despite the lessons of recent history, can still erupt without warning.

The immediate cause of outrage was almost trivial. Three

skinheads out looking for a good time on Friday night tried to gash a stag party, but were thrown out by the landlord of the pub and his two Yugoslav friends. In the youths' enraged minds, the Yugoslavs became Turks — the lowest form of life in skinhead ideology — and they vowed revenge. They went to a petrol station, bought a can of fuel and walked up to number

81, the "Turks' house" opposite the home of one of the youths.

All 14 people in the house were asleep. The skinheads sneaked in, poured the petrol over a wooden chest and set fire to it with a rolled-up newspaper. They were seen by a neighbour as they fled. The police investigation later established that Gattmann belonged to the neo-Nazi organisation Deutsche

Volks Union, and the others had all been neo-Nazi sympathisers. "We are going to set the Turks' house on fire," one of them had vowed. The other members of the lynch party had kept swastikas and neo-Nazi literature at home.

Solingen came in the wake of a series of racist attacks in Germany, starting in the East after reunification and spreading slowly to the more prosperous western parts. Shocked Germans held candle-lit vigils and mass demonstrations throughout the country, and politicians were quick to condemn xenophobia, although Chancellor Helmut Kohl was conspicuously absent from the funeral of the Solingen victims.

Fears of the country being engulfed by resurgent xenophobia proved unjustified, however. Although violent acts against foreigners continue, especially in the East, there has been no repetition of Solingen, and the neo-Nazi tide appears to be ebbing. The Republican Party, the most prominent extreme right-wing group, did not even come close to gaining a seat in last year's parliamentary elections.

## Nato chief pressed to go as trial hearing begins

SARAH HELM  
Brussels

As Nato officials started detailed planning yesterday for peace enforcement in the Balkans, Willy Claes, the alliance's secretary-general, was appearing before a Belgian parliamentary commission considering whether he should stand trial on corruption charges.

Mr Claes is accused of countenancing kickbacks, allegedly paid by Agusta, the Italian helicopter firm, to the Flemish Socialist Party in 1988.

Even before the outcome, expectations continued to grow in Brussels that Mr Claes would be obliged to resign within days, and informal speculation mounted over who would be the most likely successor. Douglas Hurd, the former British Foreign Secretary, remains a front runner, although Mr Hurd's past reluctance to intervene militarily in the former Yugoslavia could count against him, especially with Washington.

The credibility of the Nato alliance, already shaken by the affair, which has been running for

months, can only have been further damaged yesterday as television cameras flashed pictures of Mr Claes, a former Belgian foreign minister, arriving for the judicial hearing. The hearing is taking place just at a time when Nato needs to shore up its credibility in order to win backing for its newly assigned role in the former Yugoslavia.

The secretary-general himself, however, still showed no sign that he was under pressure. With a relaxed grin he appeared determined to brazen out the affair, seeming confident that his immunity from prosecution — granted to all Belgian ministers and ex-ministers — would not be lifted.

Nevertheless, it is now widely accepted that should the parliamentary commission decide there is sufficient evidence to lift Mr Claes's immunity, his term as secretary-general of Nato will be finished. A decision on whether to lift the immunity is expected within a few days. Nato sources said last night that if a trial does go ahead, "Mr Claes will be expected to do the honourable thing". One official

said: "We don't want to have to send the men in white suits because that would be embarrassing, but we would expect him to behave like a gentleman and take responsibility."

Until this week's hearing, leaders of the 16 Nato member states, particularly those in Washington, London, Paris and Bonn, had hoped that the scandal would burn out, and that Nato's pristine reputation could remain untainted by the sours of murky Belgian politics.

Commenting on the prosecution case, put to the parliamentary commission yesterday, Mr Claes said he saw "not a single new element". He added: "There is no fact. There are only so-called indications."

Inside the alliance it is taken as read that there would be enough evidence to convict Mr Claes at a full trial. This week, Robert Hunter, the US ambassador to Nato, stood by Mr Claes, but in terms which suggested he envisaged his demise: "Willy Claes led the alliance successfully from the beginning to the end. This man has proved he is a worthy secretary-general."

## "It amazed my friend . . . I said two simple words. And we were escorted to the finest table in the restaurant!"

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## international

# Serbs threaten to quit talks as fighting rages on

EMMA DALY  
Sarajevo

The Bosnian Serb leadership threatened to withdraw from the peace process yesterday as its forces were pushed back in the north-west, where the ceasefire appears to have sunk without trace. Thousands of civilians were said to be fleeing Serb-held Prijedor, which seems in danger of falling to the government following the recent losses of Sanski Most and Mrkonjic Grad.

"If the UN and international community don't do everything to stop the Muslims and Croats... we will consider very seriously stepping out of the peace process and asking Yugoslavia to do the same," said Nikola Koljevic, a senior Serb official.

Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith, the UN commander in Bosnia, met Mr Koljevic near Sarajevo yesterday to hear the Serbs' complaints. "The Serbs are pretty upset. They say [the Bosnians] are not playing by the rules," a UN source said.

There are two possible reasons for the fighting. The Bosnians claim it will take time to establish orders to cease fire; the Serbs accuse the Bosnians of attacking Prijedor. The second seems more likely.

Four shells landed in the town yesterday during a visit by Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader. "The whole world is celebrating peace, but we don't have peace," he was quoted as saying. "America has broken this cease-fire and it is obliged to stop them."

Serb sources reported panic and the flight of civilians to Banja Luka, where a curfew is in place and the situation is said to be tense. The loss of Sanski Most and Mrkonjic Grad has added to pressure on Banja Luka; the fall of Prijedor could be catastrophic to the Serbs.

"The area around Sanski Most is of considerable concern, where deliberate fighting appears to be continuing and our assessment would be that around that area there has not been a ceasefire, purely a continuation of hostilities," said

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Vernon, a UN spokesman.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees said 40,000 people fled Prijedor yesterday, and that 5,000 had reached Banja Luka. The rest were in Omaraka, site of a detention centre where many Muslims were killed by Serbs in 1992.

"The displacement problem [in the Banja Luka area] is gigantic; there is no housing for these people. They are in abominable conditions," Kris Janowski, a UNHCR spokesman in Sarajevo, said. "Sarajevo these days is much more relaxed than Banja Luka. There are cuts in the water supply, in the electricity supply and a general fear that the front lines will move again. It's miserable."

The fighting has resulted in a fall in the number of Muslims expelled from the area. "They cannot organise themselves to organise 'ethnic cleansing' when they've got the front line moving," one official said. The International Red Cross reported fearful stories from those expelled in the past few days.



Back in business: An old woman in Sarajevo selling bananas, rarely seen in the city since the war began in 1992 Photograph: David Brauch/WAP



**"We shall have to repent in this generation, not so much for the evil deeds of the wicked people but for the appalling silence of the good people."**

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

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## Sarajevans fear for the future as peace brings its problems

Sarajevo — "Trickery" is what most people suspect from the enemy, and delusions are rife in Sarajevo as it gets used to the cease-fire. The shooting echoing across the valley at night is mostly "happy fire", celebrating the truce or a wedding. The Serbs besieging the city have brought French peace-keepers to their knees, but all in a good cause. The streets are filled with people enjoying an Indian summer, but fearful of the future.

The huge explosion that rocked the city less than 30 minutes after the truce began in fact was caused by the gas and electricity supplies reaching Sarajevo as a result of the cease-fire agreement with the Serbs.

Namir Brkovic, 19, switched on the bathroom light and blew up his family's flat. With 70 per cent burns, he is in a critical condition and may not even survive planned evacuation to Italy for specialist treatment.

"He's a friend of mine," said Semira Viteskic, a nurse caring for Namir in Kosevo hospital. "I could only recognise him by his blue eyes."

Namir and his parents, who also were burnt, are victims of the war as much as any sniper victim: the blue-striped garden hose piping gas illegally into a

The longed-for ceasefire has claimed tragic new victims, writes Emma Daly

home-made burner is a typical household appliance here, where people have been forced to use any means possible to heat their homes through the bitter winters.

"At first I thought it was a shell, but when I saw there were no walls left on either side of the flat, I realised it was gas," said Namir's father, Ibrahim Brkovic, from the hospital bed where he lay, his hands and feet heavily bandaged. "It's very hard, because it happened on the day of the cease-fire."

The walls of the flat in a modern block, untouched by bullets or shrapnel, no longer exist. Not a brick or beam blocks the perfectly shaped holes in the ceiling and the floor.

The sight brings tears to the eyes of visiting friends. "Perhaps it's better to freeze than have your house explode," Omer Karalic said, grimly.

That is about as far as choice extends for many Sarajevans. "We have gas and electricity, but no water, and that is what we need most to survive," said Amer Klepo, a taxi-driving

soldier. "It is not peace or freedom," added his friend, Dzenan Mujcinovic.

Their scepticism echoed that of another soldier — a Serb. "If they don't shoot, that's good. But I don't believe it. The Muslims are not to be trusted. They have zero intelligence," spat out a man at a checkpoint on the main road from Sarajevo to Pale, the nearby headquarters of the Bosnian Serbs.

No traffic had passed the checkpoint since the fighting began in April 1992. Weeds pushed through cracks in the tarmac, while plants overflowed from the verge.

A detachment of peace-keepers was hard at work, for the road leads to the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia, and the Serbs have agreed under the cease-fire deal to open it to convoys of aid.

Some young French soldiers knelt on the road before a layer of earth and stones two inches thick, scraping delicately with hunting knives, in search of the deadly plastic mines buried within.

On a cliff high above, three Serb soldiers watched. A hundred yards up the road, UN bulldozers unceremoniously brushed aside the metal barriers that for more than three years have signified the boundary of no man's land. A Serb soldier had to stand aside. It was not surprising that he was cross, and he would not give his name.

Would we, as civilians, have problems driving along the road? "No. I'll check your car for weapons and ammunition, and double-check, and then you can go," the soldier said, to an audience of journalists and French officers. Then the peace-keepers drifted away.

He added: "Yes, of course you'll have problems. The road is closed. I am nothing. I have to wait for orders from my commanders. You can come here, but no further."

Miroslav Cvoro, another Bosnian Serb soldier at the checkpoint, looked wistful. "I think the cease-fire will be great, if both sides respect it. I just hope it's not another trick, because we all want to see the end of the war," he said.

"We're all tired of war. We can hardly wait for peace to come." And that is true for almost all Sarajevans.

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BARCLAYS



# Libya's secret war pits Islam against Gaddafi

MICHAEL SHERIDAN  
Diplomatic Editor

An underground war has broken out in Libya between Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's secular regime and Islamic militants, threatening the stability of his 26-year rule with a series of shoot-outs and Algeria-style assassinations of secret policemen.

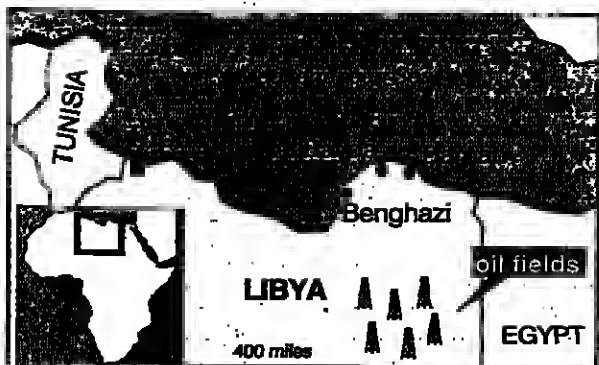
The old Italian colonial port of Benghazi has become the scene of ambushes and night-time gunfights. Last week, Islamic activists in the city claimed to have shot dead Lieutenant Colonel Jum'ah Al-Faydi, of Libyan intelligence. A week earlier, gunmen ambushed the head of a special unit set up to combat the religious opposition.

From the suburbs of Tripoli in the west, along the Mediterranean seaboard to Benghazi, Darnah and Al Bayda in the east, similar incidents have claimed dozens of lives through a simmering hot summer. In an ominous signal to Colonel Gaddafi, the trouble seems most intense in the eastern region, through which Libya's vital oil exports reach tankers bound for Europe.

In response, the regime's security services, trained by the old East German Stasi, have carried out mass arrests of Muslim activists and launched a violent campaign of repression, according to Western officials.

"The situation in Libya seems to be approaching a point of no return," said the Islamic human rights group Liberty for the Muslim World, in a statement this week. "Unless the Libyan regime undergoes essential reforms, the tide of violence will sweep the entire country," it said. "Libya is the third north African country after Egypt and Algeria to be driven into this dark tunnel by the unwise and confused policies of its rulers."

The group gave details of the Benghazi attacks and reported other clashes, including a siege in Darnah during which the security forces fired rockets at a fundamentalist hideout before storming the building. It listed 10 incidents which claimed the



lives of 10 militants and nine security men.

The violence has drawn Colonel Gaddafi into conflict with members of the esoteric Senussi sect, which in pre-revolutionary Libya commanded adherents from the deserts to the coast for its ascetic, fundamentalist brand of Islam.

Secret police in Al Bayda are said to have arrested a prominent sect member, Abu Alraqah, last month, together with 80 members of a powerful local tribe. Such measures pit the security apparatus against an influential, deep-rooted network in Libyan society whose charismatic founder united its warring tribes a century ago.

This clandestine struggle is a new, and doubtless alarming, source of pressure on Colonel Gaddafi, whose country is subject to United Nations sanctions for its refusal to extradite two intelligence agents sought on charges in connection with the destruction of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988.

Flights to and from the country are banned. Libya's delegate to the World Bank, Mohammed Bait Elmal, this week said the ban had cost his country over \$10bn (£6.4bn). He claimed that 685 Libyan children had died because of delays in getting medical supplies and that 13,500 patients had been unable to receive treatment abroad.

The UN also imposed restrictions on arms sales and diplomatic contacts. In addition, it in effect put Colonel Gaddafi's economy in a noose by requiring all payments for Libyan oil to be made through designated accounts. These could be

frozen at any moment by further Security Council action.

The combination of economic decline, international isolation and domestic unrest poses the greatest threat to Colonel Gaddafi since he seized power in a coup in 1969. The new violence reflects a dangerous regional division in Libya. Foreign businessmen detect a possible fragmentation of the

regime into competing tribal interest groups. Western intelligence sources say the pressure of sanctions has set off conflicts inside the vague and flexible Libyan power structure.

After the Islamic insurrection in Algeria and a fundamentalist guerrilla campaign against the Egyptian government, this violence will cause renewed concern in Europe. The question of Mediterranean security is high on the agenda for the Spanish presidency of the European Union, which has called a conference on the issue in Barcelona later this autumn.

Colonel Gaddafi has sent emissaries to hold secret talks with Western intelligence officials in Geneva in an effort to win concessions on the sanctions. He has gained none. Libya, like Iraq and Syria, is now living out the reality of the collapse of radical nationalism in the Arab world.



Ominous signals: International isolation, domestic unrest and economic decline threaten Colonel Gaddafi's regime

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### IN BRIEF

#### Ramos signs agreement with rebel troops

Manila — The government signed an agreement yesterday with rebel soldiers who tried at least six times to topple the former president Corazon Aquino. The deal ends a rebellion that has caused severe political and economic instability in the Philippines, although the two sides still have to continue talks on specific reforms. President Fidel Ramos said the agreement to end hostilities had been made "with neither blame or surrender". AP

#### Zulu gets life for murder of election staff

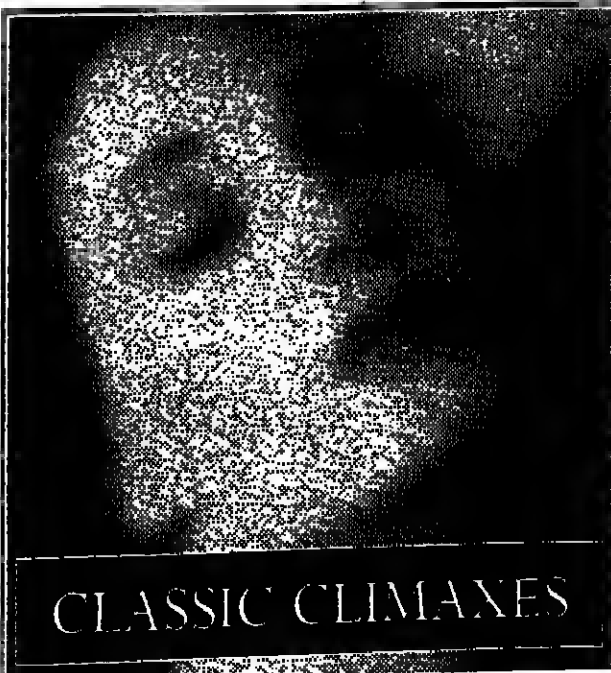
Durban — A South African Zulu headman was sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday for the murder of eight men who were distributing voter education pamphlets before last year's all-race elections. The eight were shot and hacked to death on 11 April last year while working for the Independent Electoral Commission in the Zulu stronghold of Ndwedwe near Durban. Reuter

#### Islamic militia stalls Afghan army attack

Kabul — An overnight counter-attack by Afghan government forces failed to push the invading Taliban Islamic militia from hills south of the capital, Kabul, frontline government commanders said yesterday. Reuter

#### 'Bastard' Romanian prince goes legitimate

Bucharest — A Romanian court ruled yesterday that a 75-year-old "bastard" prince was the legitimate heir to King Carol II. The judgment recognises that Mircea Grigore Lambrino is the legitimate son of the former monarch and it calls into question the status of the exiled King Michael. Reuter

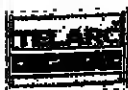


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## international

## Saddam to show strength of his iron grip

Uday Hussein split Iraq's ruling family two months ago when he opened fire with a submachine gun. The shots, fired at a party, badly wounded an uncle and prompted Uday's brothers-in-law and their wives, daughters of Saddam Hussein, to flee to Jordan. It was the biggest crisis for the government of President Saddam since defeat in the Gulf war in 1991.

The referendum tomorrow on President Saddam's leadership is directly related to the shooting by his son, and the flight of Hussein Kamel and Saddam Kamel, his sons-in-law, to Amman. It is the Iraqi leader's way of demonstrating to Iraqis and the world that his grip on power is as strong as ever. Outside the three Kurdish provinces in the north, eight million Iraqi voters will ritually endorse his rule.

The crisis has brought some changes. At the time he shot his uncle Watban - President Saddam's half-brother and the former interior minister - Uday Hussein had made himself virtual prime minister of Iraq, second only in power to his father. From a heavily protected yellow building on the east bank of the River Tigris, Uday ran much of the government and his own business enterprises. The building belongs to

His son embarrassed him, but the Iraqi leader is still in control and aims to prove it at the polls, writes **Patrick Cockburn** in Baghdad

the Iraqi Olympic Committee, of which Uday is chairman. Iraqi officials now say on the record that Uday will confine himself entirely to sport. Last week he was re-elected chairman of the Iraqi Football Association by 155 to nil.

Well-informed people in Baghdad tell stories of Uday's fall from grace, including one about how President Saddam, enraged by Uday splitting the family, personally visited the burning of his eldest son's collection of 60 cars.

Another rumour in Baghdad, which also cannot be checked for accuracy, says the Iraqi leader conducted a search of the Olympic Committee's headquarters. There, President Saddam supposedly discovered that the building contained a private jail maintained by Uday, and released three captives saying: "Iraq cannot have a state within a state."

Colourful details of Saddam Hussein's clampdown on his son may be disseminated in part by the regime itself. Lights still twinkle at night on every floor of the headquarters of the Olympic Committee, Watban,

despite treatment by Cuban and Iraqi doctors, is likely to lose the leg hit by Uday's bullet. Uday may retain more influence than his father pretends. Ultimately, however, Iraq remains wholly under the control of Saddam Hussein.



Uday: Influence is waning

He has survived the immediate crisis over the split in his family. At the same time Iraq's international isolation has never been more complete. Hopes that the Gulf war alliance would break up have proved false. King Hussein chose the moment of Hussein Kamel's defection to call for a change of

regime in Baghdad. All the other states which border Iraq - Iran, Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Syria - are hostile to Baghdad and there are no new allies in sight.

The report this week by Rolf Ekeus, the UN official in charge of monitoring the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, says that Iraq is still concealing information and probably some of the arms. This was denounced as untrue by Iraqi officials yesterday. But it underlined how far Iraq is from the lifting of UN sanctions, first imposed in 1990.

There is no doubt that sanctions do serious damage. "An average monthly salary buys just two chickens," said Viktor Wahlroos, deputy co-ordinator of UN relief operations in the country. "A quarter of the children are suffering from malnutrition. The government ration meets 50 per cent of people's needs and they don't have the money to buy the other 50 per cent."

There is no doubt that the urban poor and the professional middle classes are being badly hit. Neatly dressed Iraqis scab-

ble outside the Libyan embassy looking for jobs replacing the Palestinians and Sudanese who are being expelled. Antique dealers say that some of grandest houses in Baghdad are empty of furniture, which has been sold off to pay for food. An aid official bought two carpets, each worth \$1,500, for \$40 in Basra. The *nouveaux riches* in Baghdad are people who own agricultural land.

Iraq is still a long way from famine, however. "The government must still have hard currency accounts abroad," a foreign diplomat said. "If they were really hard-pressed they would have accepted the UN offer of limited sales of oil to meet food needs. They will do that when they get really desperate."

This may paint too favourable a picture of Iraq's position. There are few trucks on the road from Jordan and only 200 to 300 a day from Turkey. The food ration was cut last October. On the other hand the Iraqi government machinery is surprisingly efficient. Despite lack of tractors, fertiliser, pesticides and seeds, there is plenty of food in the

shops, although it is expensive. Khalid Abdul Munam Rashid, the Agriculture Minister, said that because of the lack of machinery, "we do more things manually, using eight people where we used to use two."

Control of the food supplies puts the government in a powerful position. It has other hidden strengths which explain why the embargo has had limited political and economic effect. Sanctions have no effect on transport or power supplies, because Iraq has limitless supplies of oil and refineries to turn it into fuel. "I can fill the tank of my car for less than the equivalent of one US cent," said one driver. Electric power supply in Baghdad is uninterrupted. Food shortages create anger, but not total desperation. Security is too tight for a repeat of the uprisings of 1991. At the same time there is also no sign of Iraq breaking out of five years' political and economic siege.

The results of tomorrow's referendum are not in doubt. Many Iraqis believe that invisible numbers on the ballot will allow the government to identify "No" voters. "He could get 99.9 per cent of the vote, so they may have to lower it to 95 per cent for credibility," said one person who intended to vote "Yes".



An Iraqi demonstrates his loyalty Photograph: Jamal Saidi

## Top defector reveals North Korea's plans to attack US troops

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY  
Tokyo

A high-ranking defector from North Korea yesterday painted an alarming picture of military instability in the isolated Stalinist state, including the government's plans to target American troops in the event of a war with South Korea.

Choe Ju Hwal, 46, a lieutenant-colonel in the North Korean army, defected to the South last month through an unnamed south-east Asian country. In Seoul yesterday, he described the military's resistance to North Korea's *de facto* ruler, the "violent, capricious and hysterical" Kim Jong Il.

The "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung died in July 1994, but 15 months later his chosen successor, his son, still has not assumed the presidency. Last week he made a rare appearance at a military parade marking the anniversary of the North Korean Communist Party but the eulogies in the media still referred to him by his old titles.

The conventional explanation for the delay has been the dire economic situation in the North, which is suffering rice shortages following floods. But Colonel Choe said despite his nominal command of the

armed forces, and despite cultivating senior officers with gifts of mansions and foreign limousines, "Kim Jong Il has no firm power in the military with which to keep a grip on the ruling hierarchy."

"There was a coup attempt by a group of generals in 1992, but all of them were executed," he said. "I think that a lot of senior military officers pretend to be obedient to him, but harbour a secret animosity."

Colonel Choe also set out North Korea's contingency plan, in the event of a future Korean war, to attack the 37,000 US troops stationed in the South. "North Korean military leaders believe that if attacks are first focused on the US troops and several thousand US soldiers are killed or injured, there will be anti-war demonstrations by US citizens, leading to a break in the alliance with South Korea," he said.

The two Koreas have not signed a treaty since the armistice ended the Korean War in 1953.

South Korea regularly parades refugees from the North but few defectors have been as high-ranking as Colonel Choe, who left behind, to an unknown fate, his wife, three children and his elderly mother.

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## US cancels laser weapon that can cause blindness

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

The United States has cancelled a new laser weapon after an international ban on laser devices specifically designed to blind people came into force on Thursday. But a conference on "inhumane weapons" in Vienna failed to agree on the other main issue - anti-personnel mines - and human rights groups also criticised the laser ban for not going far enough.

The Foreign Office hopes the review conference on the 1980 Inhumane Weapons Convention will reconvene in December, after the 35 nations taking part have had time to consider their positions. David Davis, a Foreign Office minister, yesterday said he was disappointed that the talks had been suspended. "We are determined the convention should be strengthened to bring an end to the irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines," he said.

"But the determined obstruction of a number of countries has made this impossible."

Whereas laser blinding weapons are a new form of warfare, as yet unused, land mines kill an estimated 26,000 people a year. Millions are scattered across Africa and South-east Asia, where they have been favoured by Third World regimes because they are a cheap but highly effective way of denying territory to an opponent. But they remain years after conflicts have ended, and are particularly dangerous to farmers, children and animals.

Western countries, including Britain, want tight controls on manufacturing and exporting anti-personnel mines and want them to self-destruct after a set period.

However, a number of countries which still manufacture and use such mines have resisted detailed negotiations. They are understood to include Russia, China, Pakistan, India and Mexico. "Better to suspend it and

spend time banging a few heads together," a British diplomatic source said of the conference.

One dispute was over verification: Western countries want to be able to carry out inspections, like those specified in other arms control treaties.

The conference passed a protocol prohibiting the use and transfer of weapons designed to cause permanent blindness to the naked eye. But it permits laser weapons to be used against optical instruments, which could cause blindness indirectly. The US-based Human Rights Watch welcomed the ban but said "the protocol is seriously flawed, because it allows an entire category of possible weapons to escape possible regulation".

The US immediately announced it was cancelling its new "Laser Countermeasure System", which is primarily aimed at optical instruments and other sensors, but which it accepted was also dangerous to the human eye.



Midnight in Moscow: The signs are new, but Russia still seems stuck in the Soviet era. Photograph: Steve Morgan

## Dingy it is, but at least Russia's still human

MOSCOW DAYS

I have to admit, I was pleased to see Sergei and Alexei and their two friends, Katya and Anna. A few moments earlier I had slid into the bar, a basement dive round the corner from my apartment, in the hope of numbing the profound shock of having just moved to Moscow after four years in Los Angeles, world capital of consumerism and convenience living. You'll feel fine if you can just have a Bud, said that inner voice.

The four Russians were halfway through their second bottle of vodka, having dispensed with a bottle of Martini, when they beckoned me to their table. "Felix, my friend, sit down," said Sergei, a young furrier, after I'd introduced myself. Philip is not an uncommon name in Russia but my hosts were uninterested in attempts to correct them. "Tell me, Felix, what do you think of Russia? It's a good country? Not like America?"

Even if my Russian had been fluent, and even if Sergei's attention had not wandered to the leather-clad female singer in the corner, there was no way this question could be answered.

How would I have explained that it is possible to miss Californian waiters, the apologetic gymnasts who bound from table to table accompanying every

caloric-cleansed plate of salad with a story about their real careers in Hollywood.

How would Sergei, a burly man who skins rabbits to be made into hats, have reacted had I pointed out that the three grim barmaids smoking behind the beer taps lacked any apparent desire to cater for their handful of customers.

If there is one aspect of Moscow life that is striking to the newcomer, particularly one from the United States, it is the gap that still exists between Russia and a truly consumer-oriented society. All those stories about Russia's growing middle class, supermarkets packed with champagne and lobster, and yuppies cruising around in BMWs, are true.

But at street level, where according to the World Bank as much as a third of the population lives below the poverty line, daily life remains closer to Soviet times than to the West.

Given the lack of wealth, it is surprising that Russians often seem to have little appetite to make a profit. It took me two attempts to persuade a dingy restaurant near my apartment that the reason I had walked in the place was to have a meal. (The first time they simply turned me away).

In the grocer's a few blocks away, a sparsely stocked store where the cashiers still use an abacus, staff waved away my request to buy bread and cheese. I was interrupting their lunch, they said. When I then retired to a cafe, the elderly waitress seemed put out that I had disturbed her viewing of a dubbed television movie starring Elizabeth Taylor. She agreed to bring me a bowl of soup, or more accurately, a bowl of hot water with an egg floating in it.

This paralysis, the by-product of 70 years in which the pursuit of profit was seen as criminal racketeering, has its refreshing side. America's hunger for the dollar can be even more exasperating than Russian gloom.

In LA the bogus vocabulary of the salesman has permeated every walk of life. Shop assistants in California's giant electronic stores now are known as "sales counsellors". When we recently decided to get rid of the rats in the roof of our home, we called a pest control company. No, we couldn't hire a rat catcher, the company said. We would have to go on a "monthly rodent assessment programme" (complete with a monthly fee).

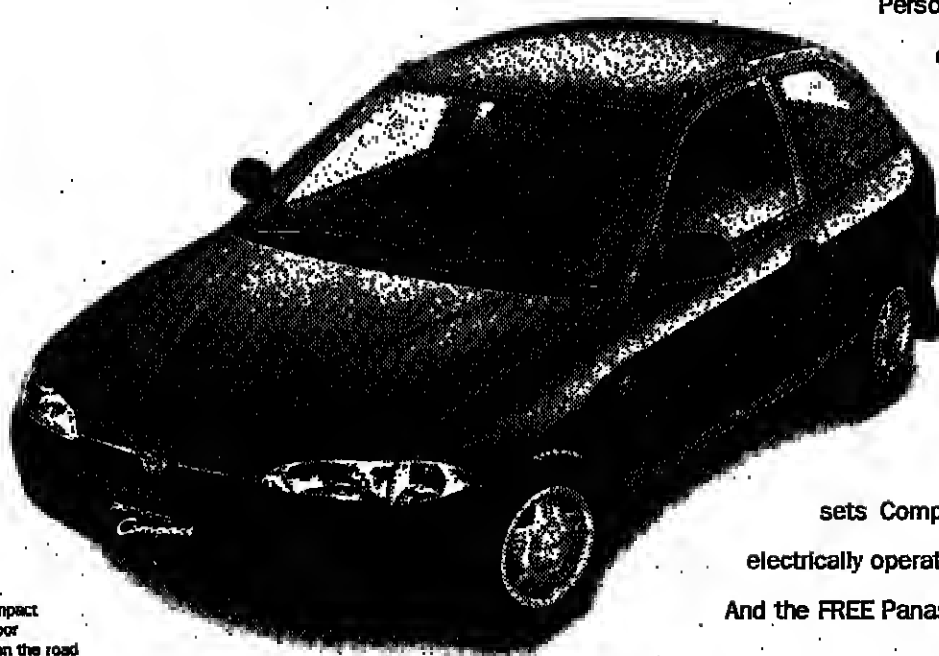
Perhaps the most heartening reminder that Russia has an element which is lacking in the pre-packaged, push-button world came when a colleague invited me to a barbecue at an old wooden dacha outside Moscow, a small slice of paradise that Stalin set aside for top nuclear scientists. As Costa, my husband, prepared the food, it was clear that this gathering could not have taken place in southern California.

As it was raining (no Californian would have dreamed of being outside in wet weather).

Costa did not have a barbecue, not even one of those \$3 use-once-and-throw-away kits. He built a real fire, without a single instant-igniting barbecue briquette.

It was with this in mind that I began to answer Sergei's question. Too late. The furrier was on his feet, hurrying into folk songs. "Stand up, Felix," he said, waving his glass of vodka at me. "Let's toast Russia and America." So we drank to them both.

PHIL REEVES



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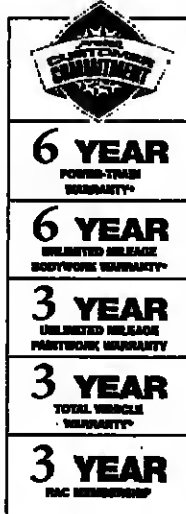
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## obituaries / gazette

## Paolo Gucci

Paolo Gucci, the former vice-president and managing director of both of Gucci Shops Inc and Gucci Parfums of America, was a key player in the power struggle for control of the Gucci leather goods and fashion empire. In fact, it was Paolo who initiated an extraordinary series of lawsuits that would eventually lead to the downfall of the Guccis, who in the early Nineties were forced to sell the family business to the Arab investment bank Investcorp.

In Italy, the Gucci family was as famous for its highly public quarrels as it was for the leather goods that made its fortune. It was a bitter fight with his own father that inspired Guccio Gucci, the founder of the family firm, born in 1881, to leave Florence for London, where he found work as a waiter at the Savoy Hotel. The elegant suitcases and trunks of the hotel's rich patrons made a lasting impression on the young Guccio, who upon his return to Florence in 1904 opened a workshop in Via della Bigna producing saddles, riding boots and luggage.



Gucci family disputes

Guccio's son and Paolo's father, Aldo, moved to New York in 1953 and played a leading role in improving the family's fortunes by persuading rich Americans to appreciate the understated elegance of the firm's handbags and, above all, of its loafers. By the end of the Fifties, the Gucci intertwined double-G trademark had become a firm favourite of film stars such as Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn and Grace Kelly.

In 1977, Aldo made Paolo vice-president and managing director of Gucci Shops Inc and of Gucci Parfums of America. But, after a period of expansion in the Seventies, bad times befell the Guccis in the early Eighties. The family disputes first became public when Paolo fell out with his uncle Rodolfo over the American subsidiaries. According to Paolo, all his troubles stemmed from his attempts to expand and modernise the Gucci empire by marketing the name "Gucci" with a licensing operation. He claimed that the family, especially his uncle Rodolfo, who had fired him from the Italian parent company in 1978, wanted to keep the business small, exclusive and old-fashioned. In 1983, Rodolfo died, leaving his shares in the company to his son Maurizio, then 25. Inevitably this led Maurizio into conflict with his uncle and his three cousins.

More trouble erupted when Paolo decided he wanted to sell his own range of goods under the name "Paolo Gucci" and

filed a lawsuit for compensation from the family business. After Aldo fired him from his jobs with Gucci in America, Paolo turned against his father, and produced documents showing that Aldo had siphoned off profits to offshore companies to avoid paying taxes. In 1986, Aldo Gucci pleaded guilty in a US court to evading \$7m in taxes and was jailed for a year and a day.

Ironically, Paolo was landed in jail himself by his own matrimonial misadventures. Last year, he spent five weeks behind bars in New York on contempt charges for failing to pay his estranged English-born second wife, Jenny Garwood, almost half a million dollars in back alimony and child support for their daughter, Gemma. Paolo already had two other daughters, Elisabetta and Patrizia, from his first wedding with Yvonne Moschetto, who still lives in Florence. Paolo had broken up with Jenny in 1990, after he took up with Penny Armstrong, a stable-girl at the stud farm adjoining his mansion

in Ruspur, Sussex, with whom he went on to have two children. Paolo, who in 1987 reportedly received around \$41m from Investcorp for his share in the family firm, recently sought bankruptcy protection in the United States, citing debts of \$90m. One week before his death, he signed a restructuring plan to pay back his creditors. Paolo's death has left Penny Armstrong and his estranged wife Jenny Garwood to carry on the battle over his money. According to one estimate, his British assets of a mansion and stables in Sussex, and a string of prize thoroughbred Arab horses, are worth some £3m.

Wolfgang Aechter

**Paolo Gucci, businessman; born 1931; vice-president and managing director, Gucci Shops Inc and Gucci Parfums of America 1977-82; married first Yvonne Moschetto (two daughters; marriage dissolved), 1977 Jenny Garwood (one daughter; and one son, one daughter by Penny Armstrong); died London 10 October 1995.**



Baines: 'The weight of a stone that a woman carries on her head can be seen in her ankle'

## Harry Baines

Harry Baines was one of Britain's finest realistic figurative draughtsmen. He worked to a discipline, unfashionable for many years, which forged such exponents as Eric Kennington, A.K. Lawrence and James Stroudley. Baines brought to his favourite medium, charcoal, an uncommon warmth of handling, especially when recording the people of India.

Baines's love-affair with the sub-continent began during the Second World War. He served there with the Royal Engineers from 1941 to 1946, being seconded to the Information Department of the Government of India as director of the design studio. He had travelled widely, holding exhibitions to promote the war effort. One result of this Indian stay was his fine portrait of Lal Bahadur Shastri, first Indian winner of the Victoria Cross, which is now in the Imperial War Museum.

Baines would have liked to stay in India after demobilisation. He was offered a job in an advertising agency, but for family reasons returned to London, joining the Ministry of Information exhibitions, where he met his wife, Pauline Behr, a typographer and book designer. Disliking an office-bound life, Baines soon left to freelance.

He had been well trained for this. Born in Manchester, he had attended junior art school from the age of 14. His father, who worked in insurance, and his mother encouraged their only child and from 1930 to 1934 Baines attended Manchester School of Art under R.A. Daw-

son, winning the Heywood Medal. Baines's drawing master was friendly with the medical school, and art students were able to take part in dissecting, which Baines said helped his knowledge of anatomy. Another formative influence was a show of William Robert's work. Surviving drawings from this period indicate Robert's influence, although Baines was to evolve a livelier, powerful style.

Baines's diploma was in mural painting, and during the next five years he completed murals in the North. Examples at Timperley Church, Cheshire, and Longford Cinema, Manchester, were included in the Tate Gallery show "Contemporary British Mural Painting" in 1938. There was a brief period teaching at Bristol Art College before war intervened.

In 1949 Baines and his wife visited Italy, a Spartan stay in a hill hut that had been used by partisans. A Tate Gallery post-war show of modern French painting had been an eye-opener for Baines, and he now became impressed by the Italian Realists, such as Guttuso, whose work was prominent in the Venice Biennale of 1950. The people and countryside of Italy became a further passion for Baines, who returned from a holiday there only 10 days before he died.

Not surprisingly, Baines's Realism attracted the attention of the critic John Berger, who wrote an introduction to a portfolio of his lithographs, *Quarrymen*, published in 1953. A friend had suggested Baines look at the limestone quarry

workers near Plymouth, who proved an apt subject. Reviewing an exhibition of paintings on Indian themes at the Commonwealth Institute in 1955, Berger said that Baines "communicates what he feels by means of superb draughtsmanship. The weight of a stone that a woman carries on her head can be seen in her ankle". He praised "an important contribution to the development of English Realism".

Baines's superb drawings, done on leave in the war, of sculptures and pictures in the Ellora and Ajanta caves had made an impression at India House in 1946. In 1954 he and his wife travelled India for six months, then in the early 1960s he was there again to record impressions as British engineers built a steelworks in West Bengal. Soon after, he painted murals in the British pavilion at Delhi Industrial Fair, then in 1972, as guest of the Indian Council for Cultural Affairs, Baines began a systematic study of Indian sculpture.

In 1976, with the writer Richard Lannon, Baines was commissioned for the book *The Eye of Love*, concentrating on temple sculpture. The drawings were exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. Indian and Italian drawings were featured in Baines's last solo show, at Alpha House Gallery, Sherborne, in 1992.

David Buckman

**Frederick Harry Baines, artist; born Manchester 19 June 1910; married 1952 Pauline Behr; died London 8 October 1995.**

## Lillian Fuchs

The death of Lillian Fuchs a few weeks before her 92nd birthday is a sad loss to chamber music. Of her many achievements, perhaps the most important was that she belonged to that small body of musicians who believe that the viola can compete with the violin as a solo instrument. She owned a fine Gasparo de Salò viola which she handled with ease in spite of her small stature.

She was born in New York into a musical family and her brothers Joseph (violin) and Harry (cello) both became professional musicians with whom she made many appearances.

Her first instrument was the violin, which she studied with Louis Svecenski and Franz Kneisel at the New York Institute of Musical Art (now the

Juilliard School), where she also studied composition with Percy Goetschius. She graduated in 1924, winning numerous prizes. She made a successful New York debut as a violinist in 1926 but had already been playing the viola - her real love - for a year as a member of the Perol String Quartet, with whom she stayed until the mid-1940s.

From this time onwards she earned a distinguished reputation as a viola soloist in the United States and Europe and in 1953 she was a soloist in the Casals Festival at Prades. She also regularly performed chamber music with her brothers and other celebrated musicians. Many composers dedicated works to her, including Jacques de Menasse, Quincy Porter, Vittorio Rieti and Bohuslav

Martini, who wrote the beautiful *Madrigaly* (1947) for her.

Although equally talented as a composer, the general public are less aware of this side of her accomplishments. She published 12 *Caprices* for solo viola (1950), *Sonata Pastorale* (1956) and a *Jota and Caprice Fantastique* for violin and piano. She also arranged Mozart's Violin Concerto in G (K216) for viola and provided it with cadenzas (1947) and was the first to perform and record Bach's six cello suites on the viola. She made some unique piano accompaniments for the Paganini caprices for violin, written for her brother Joseph.

Teaching was yet another of Fuchs's achievements. She taught at the Manhattan School of Music from 1962, Aspen Summer Institute in Colorado

from 1964, and the Juilliard School from 1971. Over the years she was responsible for the training of many musicians now at the top of the profession; she claimed that her very first student on the viola was Isaac Stern, and much later, Pinchas Zukerman. But she said, "I don't take credit for anyone. You can help them, you can feed them, you can educate them, but what they do themselves is what finally counts."

Fuchs made many recordings, an outstanding example being the Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante* (K364) and *Duo for Violin and Viola* (K423) with her brother Joseph. Recently reissued on CD are two live performances of the Mozart with Casals conducting, and the *Spring Divertimento* with her brother and the cellist Paul Tortelier.

## Ursula Wyndham

Ursula Wyndham achieved unlikely celebrity late in life by publishing two volumes of autobiography. Their success was the more unexpected because her books were aristocratic memoirs of an existence even less eventful than is usual in a woman of her background, but the unfashionable genre and the thin story only served to highlight the author's vivid and forceful personality. These were not nostalgic backward glances at a better age but caustic and often witty commentaries on a difficult life by one who there by triumphed over adverse circumstances, not least her own impulsive nature.

Born into a hugely wealthy aristocratic family, Wyndham might have seemed to outsiders a privileged creature, but, as she later acknowledged, she had few of the qualifications for success in her world, which was narrower than it seemed. Though she took her place in the hunting-field, she was ill suited to the drawing-room and the marriage market. She was never pretty or graceful; her education was neglected, and she suffered until late middle age from a crippling stammer.

Her parents were not sympathetic, and the first volume of her autobiography, *As I Was* (1983), is a devastating portrait of them which she based on the need for revenge. The root of the problem for Colonel and Mrs Wyndham, as Ursula saw it, was less personal than social. She figured as that donkey-devised thing, the daughter of a younger son. And although, by a series of freaks, her father eventually inherited the family title, as the fifth Lord Leconfield, and Ursula later gained access to a substantial fortune, both came into their patrimony too late to enjoy it.

This was not the only frustrating circumstance in her life. She was a woman of strong passions with a craving for the love and companionship denied her in childhood, and her second volume, *Laughter and the Love of Friends* (1989), is the record of a long affair with an older married man who was clearly puzzled by the strength of her feelings. The book is a richly comic account of their misunderstandings etched by a sharp eye in piquant style, though not always in full consciousness of

its implications. When her lover's wife became ill, for example, Wyndham - an excellent cook - thoughtfully left a steak-and-kidney pie on her rival's doorstep as an anonymous gift. It was not well received.

The fundamental unhappiness of her life was assuaged in part by many pleasures and interests. During the Second World War she worked in a factory, where for the first time she enjoyed good relationships with ordinary people. This was a revelation. After leaving her parents' home she lived alone in Sussex and lived good. The activity served a double purpose: being obliged to pasture the animals on verges, she read in the hedgerows while they grazed by the road and thus acquired the education earlier denied her.

Though claiming to despise the conventions of upper-class life, she was fascinated by genealogy and social history. She travelled extensively and wrote several other unpublished books, including a life of Queen Charlotte. She was an expert needlewoman. But, above all, friendship was vitally important to her, especially the friendship of younger people. When her



Wyndham: formidable

nephew Lord Egremont gave her an 80th-birthday party at Petworth, the average age of the guests was well under 50.

Her interest in others was fed by the success of her memoirs which brought not only fan letters but also a surprising new career as television personality and journalist. For a while she wrote regularly as agony aunt in the *Oldie*. If she made up the queries herself, that was testimony to her inventiveness and her fondness for giving categorical advice on problems she had meditated for many years. For, as many of her friends

discovered, Ursula Wyndham could be a formidable figure. The daughter, friend and mistress of collieries, it is not surprising that she was a formidable figure. She made a beeline for the highest of them. Her tall, spare figure, military bearing and beetling brows mirrored that in her life and made her a formidable figure. She was not only a formidable figure, but also a formidable personality. She was not only a formidable figure, but also a formidable personality. She was not only a formidable figure, but also a formidable personality.

Generous and forthcoming in peacetime, she could be wild and dangerous when roused. With the manners of a county lady she combined the outlook of a bandit chief. Tongue-tied in youth, she was determined to make herself heard in old age, and the lengthy telephone calls her friends learnt to expect ranged from lively debates to fiery tirades.

Peter Wainwright

**Ursula Constance Wyndham, writer; born London 20 September 1913; died, Petworth, Sussex 9 October 1995.**

bar the Great, Mogul Emperor, 1542; Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, philosopher, 1844; Sir Pelham Grenville Woodhouse, novelist, 1881. Deaths: Mata Hari (Margaretha Geertruida Zelle), executed for espionage, 1917; Hermann Goerring, Nazi leader, committed suicide 1946; Cole Albert Porter, composer and lyricist, 1964. On this day: The Great Exhibition in Hyde Park was closed, 1851; Cologne Cathedral was solemnly opened, 1880; the Cambridge Theatre, London, opened, 1881. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Euthymius the Younger, St Leonard of Vaudouze, St Theresa of Avila and St Thecla of Kitzingen.

## Lectures

**TODAY** National Gallery: Norman Condy, "Under the Surface (II): Ingres, Madame Mollere", 12pm. British Museum: Dalia Pemberton, "Ancient Egyptian Painting and Drawing", 1.15pm.

## Dinners

Royal Naval College Greenwich Judge J.S. Sessions, Judge Advocate of the Fleet, was the guest of honour at the Annual Dinner of the Royal Navy Baristas held yesterday evening in the Painted Hall at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

## Headquarters Strike Command

Gp-Capt A.C. Montgomery presided at a Dining in Night held yesterday evening in the Officers' Mess, Headquarters Strike Command, Royal Air Force High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

## Anniversaries

**TODAY** Births: Eamon De Valera, statesman, 1882; Katherine Mansfield, writer, 1888; Lillian Gish (Lillian Diana de Guiche), actress, 1894. Deaths: Harold, King of England, killed in battle 1066; Errol Flynn, actor, 1959; Bing Crosby, singer, 1977; Leonard Bernstein, conductor and composer, 1990. On this day: Mary, Queen of Scots was tried, 1586; the trial of Marie Antoinette took place, 1793; Oxford University degrees were first conferred on women, 1920. Today is the Feast Day of St Agatha, St Burchard of Wurzburg, St Calixtus I, pope, St Dominic Laurens, St Justus of Lyons, St Mamercus and St Mamachi.

## TOMORROW: Births: Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro), poet, 70 BC; Ak-

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## BIRTHS

**MATTHEWS:** In London, on 4 October, to Nicola (nee Slade) and Ross, a son, Jacob John Zachary.

**Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS** (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5UL, telephoned to 0171-293 2811 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2810, and are charged at 56.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER: Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or Read) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal today attends the Royal Naval Association Concert and Reception at the Royal Albert Hall, London SW7. The Princess Margaret, Princess, National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, today attends the Society's Berkshire Appeal Ball at West Wycombe Park, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Princess Alexandra, accompanied by Sir Angus Ogilvy, today begins official visits to Botswana and Senegal.

## Changing of the Guard

**TODAY** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. **TOMORROW** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards moves the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards.

## Birthdays

**TODAY** Lord Barnett, former MP, 72; Mr Reginald Bostin, former trade union leader, 79; Mr John Boyd, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, 62; Mr Roland Butcher, cricketer, 62; Mr Steve Cram, athlete, 35; Mr Vivian Davies, Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities, British Museum, 48; Mr John de Courcy Ling, former MEP and diplomat, 62; Mr Thomas Dohy, keyboard player, 37; Mrs Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, Vice-Chancellor, University of East Anglia, 57; Sir Leslie Fitcher, former chairman, The Rank Organisation, 73; Sir Christopher French, High Court judge, 70; Professor John Griffith, former Chancellor of Manchester University, 77; Air Chief Marshal Sir David Harcourt-Smith, 64; Mr Justin Hayward, rock singer, 49; Mr David Hinchliffe MP, 47; Mr James Hodgson, former vice-chairman, British Telecom, 70; Professor Victor Hoffbrand, haematologist, 60; Mr Joe Hyman, former chairman, John Croucher Group, 74; Mr William Jarvis, racehorse trainer, 35; Sir Richard Luca, Vice-Chancellor, University of Buckingham, 59; Mr John Moore, actor, 68; Sir Derek Oulton QC, former Permanent Secretary, Lord Chancellor's Office, 68; Mme Françoise Pascal, actress, 46; Mr Thomas Prentice, life president, Harrisons and Crossfield, 76; Mr Cliff Richard, singer, 55; Mr John Rogers, senior partner and chief executive, Touche Ross & Co, 57; Mr Roger Taylor, tennis player, 54; Mr Christopher Timothy, actor, 55; Miss Carole Thorne, MEP, 40; Mr Kieran Tunney, playwright, 73; Mr Alan Williams MP, 65; Mr Derek Wood QC, Principal, St Hugh's College, Oxford, 58.

**TOMORROW:** The Duchess of York, 36; Lord Baden-Powell, vice-president of the Scout Association, 59; Sir George Bishop, former chair-

man, Booker McConnell, 82; Mr Howard Colvin, architectural historian, 76; Professor John K. Galbraith, economist, 87; The Very Rev Eric Heaton, former Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, 75; Sir Julian Hodge, merchant banker, 91; Mr Tito Jackson, singer, 42; Mr Alan Jones, chairman and chief executive, Westland Group, 66; Miss Catherine Lampert, director, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 49; Dame Anne Mueller, former senior civil servant, 65; Baroness Mary of Southdown, President, Lady Cavendish College, Cambridge, 64; Mr Peter Phillips, founder and musical director, the Tallis Scholars, 42; Mr Mario Puzo, novelist, 75; Professor Charles Rees, organic chemist, 68; Mr George Sava, author and singer, 72; Professor Arthur Schlesinger, author and Schlesinger Professor of the Humanities, City University of New York, 78; Baroness Serota, former Ombudsman, 76; Mr David Trimble MP, 51; Sir John Vinelott, High Court judge, 72; Sir Christopher Watford, Lord Mayor of London, 60.

## Anniversaries

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## TOMORROW: Births: Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro), poet, 70 BC; Ak-

## The sound case for women cardinals

## faith &amp; reason

The Roman Catholic Church in Britain is so smoothly run and so united in outward loyalty and inward indifference to Rome that it is easy to forget the magnitude of the civil war raging almost everywhere else in the Church in the developed world.

Two American religious papers give us a taste of it. One is the *National Catholic Reporter*, for which the late Peter Hebblethwaite was Rome correspondent; the other is the *Catholic World Report*, a glossy monthly devoted to the cause of tradition. It is difficult to believe they are describing the same church; all that seems to unite them is the bilious tone with which they describe their enemies, each other.

But there are deeper similarities. Both believe that they represent the one true church, and that the tendencies represented by the other will strangle and poison the truth if allowed to flourish. Both believe that the crucial battleground is over appointments and that sex and authority are intimately connected. These beliefs have come to the forefront of both papers with the affair of the 30 women cardinals.

The Pope started it. In a statement made just before his visit to America, he urged the Church to make use of the gifts of women in leadership positions. Of course, he believes that women can never be priests and that for Catholics even to discuss this possibility is wrong, and he has done his utmost, by argument, decree and appointments policy, to stifle dissent on this issue. Quite rightly, so, the *Catholic World Report* would say. It is his job to guard the truth. Yet he does obviously believe that women should exercise power in the secular world.

Lay people generally have little power in Rome. The system is not set up for it.

The Pope wants to see women in positions of leadership. Until 1916 there was no requirement for cardinals to be priests. Why not bring back lay cardinals? asks Andrew Brown.

The last time the issue of women's power was seriously debated there was, I think, the autumn of last year, when a Zairean bishop proposed making women cardinals. The tradition that cardinals, who elect the Pope, must be priests was only codified in 1916. There is no insuperable doctrinal argument that says they have to be ordained; and, if they could be lay people once more, some of them might be women.

That is the proposal which the *National Catholic Reporter* has revived. In an editorial in the latest issue, it proposes that the 30 gaps in the college of cardinals at the moment be filled with women, with the sum of having half the college as women by the year 2000. In the same issue appears an article by Fr Andrew Greeley, a priest and sociologist, assessing the worth of the present bench of bishops in the US: "With unrelenting consistency in recent years, the Vatican has appointed... mean-spirited careerists - inept, incompetent, insensitive bureaucrats who are utterly indifferent to their clergy and laity."

I would not want by this quote to make the *Catholic World Report* seem the voice of reason. If anything, it is the easier of the two to parody, if only because its motto is so obviously "no surrender". The *Reporter's* proposal for women cardinals was greeted by the *CWR* as yet another example of deliberate treason.

But there is a real difficulty here. The *CWR* is right to point out that many prominent Catholic intellectuals are disloyal to the teachings of the Church. It is wrong to suppose this problem can be solved by sacking or silencing all dissenters. The teachings of the Church have both a hierarchical and a democratic authority. Catholics believe them true because the Church has pronounced them true, but part of the Church's proclamation of these truths is the fact that Catholics assent to them. This assent cannot in the long run be compelled.

At the moment, it is withheld in crucial areas by most Catholics in the developed world and whether the resulting disagreement is conducted in public, as in America, or in private, as it is for the most part in Britain, the consequences are poisonous. Hypocrisy is not the worst vice, but institutionalised hypocrisy is dangerous for a church that claims to be founded on truth. Yet what else can a church practice when it cannot admit to uncertainty?

I suspect this state of institutionalised hypocrisy is a powerful reason both for the shortage of vocations and for the fact that the Catholic Church in Britain has been for years losing members faster than the Church of England. Perhaps it will take a woman cardinal to see some way out of the mess.

عبد الله بن عبد الله



# the saturday story

## Welcome home, OJ: don't expect a party

A jury acquitted him of murder, but the former sporting hero is finding Americans far from ready to re-embrace him, says Tim Cornwell

"Hallelujah! I'm home!" With these three words, OJ Simpson stepped back through the doors of his Brentwood estate, his home for 17 years. At least that was the version in the *Star*, the supermarket which had paid a six-figure sum to be there.

"Clutching the worn Bible he had kept by his side in his cramped jail cell," ran the *Star's* account, "a beaming Simpson walked through the front door of his mansion and announced to pals: 'I'm home, I'm home with my family. I want my kids, I want my life.'"

Simpson's acquittal of the charge of murdering his wife Nicole and waiter Ronald Goldman is a test of Andy Warhol's adage that in America, fame is a force that obscures every other aspect of a personality, including whatever one was famous for in the first place.

But fame, at least in the immediate aftermath of Simpson's release, has lost out to a sense of small-town outrage. Pay-per-view TV distributors declined to carry Simpson's first interview. Plans for a free session with NBC, in which Simpson would tell his side of the story, fell through this week amid mounting public protest. Other vaunted multi-million dollar deals have failed to materialise.

There is an established tradition in the US of celebrities seeking redemption through confession, from straying televangelists to actor Hugh Grant, who went to take his medicine on late-night television after his encounter with a prostitute. The most successful rehabilitation was probably that of cocaine user Maroon Barry, who returned, born again, from jail to be re-elected mayor of Washington DC.

Simpson has begun that process by saying he was wrong to "get physical" with Nicole back in 1989, and offering to meet battered women to "talk about my relationship". But already he is finding that, despite his acquittal by jury, the mood of Americans is far from reconciliatory.

This week, a sign went up near Simpson's house, in an expensive, immaculately trimmed and overwhelmingly white section of Los Angeles. It read: "Welcome to the neighbourhood. Home of the Brentwood Butcher."

At Simpson's Sherwood Country Club, there was a move this week to revoke his membership. OJ was dropped by International Creative Management, the big-shot talent agency, and by former Dallas cast member Charlene Tilton, who vowed to boycott him whenever she saw him.

And Hertz cars, in whose ads Simpson had famously rushed through an airport, shrilly denied even considering taking him back.

"The story is absolutely false and without a shred of foundation," said a spokesman. Ten days after the murders, 66 per cent of Americans believed OJ did it. After his acquittal, the figure climbed to 73 per cent.

The *Star's* story was headlined "OJ's Joyful Homecoming" and delivered, as promised, "dozens of fabulous intimate photos". There was OJ clasping ailing mum Eunice, OJ with sister Carmelita pulling his grey hairs, OJ in a private moment with adult son Jason on the balcony, OJ with best buddy Al Cowling loosening his tie. There was OJ with attorney Johnnie Cochran, pointing down at a rug on the floor where the bloody socks were found - or planted to frame him, as Cochran would argue - with OJ joking: "Where are the socks? Where are the socks?"

Amid the platitudes was a note out of key. Simpson's first move was to walk into the living room and immediately turn on his three TV sets. He saw his nemesis, LA District Attorney Gil Garcetti, announcing at a post-trial press conference that the investigation was closed.

Again and again, Simpson returned to the television, talking to the set, demanding to know from arriving visitors why police weren't hunting the real killers. Since then, it is reported, he has been watching several TV channels at once. None of them have been kind to him.

Like Bill Clinton at the height of the Whitewater affair, Simpson has seen others shaping his image, a process he finds deeply frustrating. Convinced of his own innocence, he seems unable to convey that knowledge to a suspicious world. Public approval was always important to him, friends say, from the beginning of his career as football hero, minor actor and corporate glad-hander.

It was symptomatic of his desperation that Simpson first suggested the NBC interview to the network's West Coast president Don Ohlmeyer, an old friend, at the party after the verdict, without taking the advice of his lawyers.

Simpson asked that there should be no advertising breaks during the interview. He even ruled out any participation by his old friend, NBC reporter Bryant Gumbel, who consequently went into a sulk, calling in sick. Instead, it was to be handled by Tom Brokaw, NBC's nightly news anchor, and Katie Couric, a morning show anchor.

But for all the efforts to maintain the appearance of propriety, an estimated 10,000 protest calls jammed NBC switchboards in New York and California. Outside one NBC office, photographers cap-



Don't come too close: Simpson wants to tell his version but not at any price

Jeff Vinnick/Reuters

tured what will be a lasting image of the OJ debate: a white woman's rights protester, Alexandra Weiss, in a shouting match with a black Simpson sympathiser, Kwame Fonn. She held a placard reading: "NBC is guilty of pandering to a murderer".

All the networks began juggling their schedules on the basis that the interview would sweep the ratings board on Wednesday night. Rupert Murdoch's Fox TV settled for a second-rate film, *Beethoven*, and CBS scheduled re-runs of re-runs. The only serious rival was a major league baseball game on ABC. CNN was stuck with an election debate between the nine Republican presidential contenders.

NBC forecast an audience of 92 million people; the interview was to go on to its international cable station to some 60 million homes in Europe. Previous Simpson high points, both the slow-motion car chase before the trial and the verdict at its end, have drawn record audiences.

The network approached Marcia Clark, OJ's prosecutor, and asked if she would like to take part in the show, but she declined. Ms Clark now has her own Hollywood agent. So does her black colleague Christopher Darden, marking the descent into the media circus of virtually the only player in the Simpson trial who emerged with some semblance of dignity.

Both Brokaw and Couric have solid journalistic credentials. But they faced mounting pressure from colleagues and the public to ask only the toughest questions, most of them variations on "when did you stop beating your wife?"

The *Boston Globe* offered a list of 10. They ranged from the soft-pedal "Do you see a special role for yourself in black America?" to "Why did you flee with Al Cowling after agreeing to turn yourself in, and what did you plan to do with the passport and the money?" and the disarmingly blunt: "Why did you beat Nicole?"

Readers of other newspapers proposed challenging Simpson to take a lie detector test or a truth drug. Their suggestions included: "Where are the leather gloves Nicole bought for you in 1991?" and "Why was your blood at the crime scene?"

Legal experts were not surprised that Simpson's team called the interview off; rather, they were astonished that he had agreed to it in the first place. He faces three civil suits from the relatives of Goldman and Nicole alleging that he killed them and claiming unspecified damages. An hour's interview, however well handled, could have opened up any number of avenues for cross-examination, they said.

Robert Thurltelot, attorney for the family of butchered waiter Ronald Goldman, says not even a \$150m offer will keep them out of court. His declared aim is to seek justice, not cash, and in the process to bankrupt Simpson, taking not just current wealth but future earnings.

As Brokaw went on air to announce that the interview had been cancelled, the NBC machine

swung into reverse, pulling out an episode of *SeaQuest* for the night and going back to advertisers who had balked at the OJ show. Fox TV stuck with *Beethoven*.

Simpson then placed a call out of the blue to *New York Times* television reporter Bill Baker to explain the decision to cancel. Baker had interviewed him for a personality profile years before, and had not covered the murder trial.

"My lawyers told me I was being set up," Simpson told Baker. "They felt the interview was going to be tantamount to a grand jury hearing." His attorneys, marshalled by Johnnie Cochran, voted nine-to-one against it.

What Baker came away with after their 45-minute chat, he said, was that Simpson "was a guy obsessed with the way he was portrayed on television... incredibly, picaresque little things. He can't stop watching... He feels he is being presented in a certain way."

Simpson was particularly cross about reports he was to marry his girlfriend, model Paula Barbieri, in the Caribbean. "I've spoken to Paula but she has not been to my house. I have not seen her. But I saw that a guy in the Dominican Republic said he had confirmed we were there."

The Bermuda press went mad this week over reports that a visiting 44-year-old Boston lawyer, Mark S Furman, was actually Mark E Furman, the detective in the Simpson case whose racist views became Cochran's strongest suit in the courtroom. Bermuda's immigration minister first confirmed that Furman was on the island, then apologised to Furman for the mistake.

Simpson said there was no custody battle in the offing with Nicole's family, as reported, over the fate of the couple's two children, Sydney, nine, and Justin, seven. "We've agreed on the professional help for the kids. There is no conflict," he said.

Some of the criticism levelled at NBC for pandering to Simpson was tured on the *New York Times* for running the Baker interview. But the newspaper - coincidentally or not - ran a long and sympathetic story the next day on Nicole's emergence as a symbol for battered women.

Simpson this week hired a new attorney for his civil case - Robert Baker, known as a tough litigator. Johnnie Cochran may not appeal in Santa Monica, the mostly white and wealthy area where the case will be tried. And in a civil case, only a majority of jurors have to agree on a "preponderance of the evidence" before awarding damages.

As one trial is over, another is only just beginning. In the civil case, scheduled to get under way next April, Simpson can be forced to testify, experts say. But civil summonses are not sufficient cause for extradition from many countries: perhaps it is time, say some cynical pundits, for Simpson to find a new life in Mexico, or Switzerland... anywhere the cameras and the lawyers can't reach him.

## Jo Brand's week

We women can't even go through the menopause in peace. Yep, the men have muscled in on that, as well. According to the Americans, that is. I'm not looking forward to the menopause. If I wanted to have hot flashes and feel depressed, I'd go to aerobics. And the thought of one's other half snivelling and groaning is enough to make me plan an unfortunate accident for whoever it might be, now. The Americans call the male menopause "the andropause" and have come up with testosterone patches to help the poor lads through the worst symptoms. These include fatigue, depression, erectile dysfunction and hot flashes. Who were their research subjects? Maybe they used a group of men who had just had a lads' night out down the pub? The symptoms sound uncomfortably familiar to me. Or perhaps English scientists have the answer. They can save on testosterone patches because they have discovered that testosterone levels rise dramatically when a man's football team wins and descend when it loses. My sympathy goes out to fellow Crystal Palace supporters of the male variety. You must have virtually none of the stuff left.

I attended a conference in Brighton last week. (No, not that one.) The conference was organised by a group called Threshold, which deals with problems faced by women who are mentally ill. The attendance consisted completely of women, with not a man to be seen. I assumed, as many did, that the conference was closed to men. Apparently not. None of them had chosen to attend. Now men, where are you?

I do think there is something to be said for infantile philosophy. A friend of mine is treading warily through the minefield of sexuality with her very little daughter at the moment. Having scotched the evil rumour that men



The monkey is father of the man

impregnate women by sneaking up on them in the dead of night and urinating on them, she attempted to answer questions on where the human race came from, to be met by the statement: "I think God made all the ladies and all the men came from the monkeys." Not a bad theory in my opinion.

An American Gold Card holder has recently charged £13m by mistake after a trip to a restaurant. (I normally only get that sort of bill at a burger place on my birthday.) Bureaucracy being what it is, it took a few days to sort the problem out, but it reminded me of an incident when I worked in the Civil Service. This was the most tedious job I have ever had and consisted of paying a group of domestic staff every week and sorting out their sick pay. The boredom was only relieved by trips to the cheap bar at lunch time and the cryptic crossword. The computer staff were obviously getting tanked up as well, because one day I got a very tearful woman on the phone who had received a bill for £17m and said she could never afford it and could she arrange to pay so much off a week. She was so grateful when I said I was sure it was a mistake. I decided to celebrate in the bar with a few drinks, fell asleep on my desk after



lunch, dribbled all over it and was caught by the boss and asked to leave. I'd like to thank that woman for getting me out of the place.

I watched one of those late-night chats on Channel 4 the other night involving men trying to come to grips with the problems of relationships. This week, they'd let women on as well so they could all blab on together and try to come to some sort of conclusion about where we are vis a vis the sex war. The main problem to me seemed to be the apparent inability of anyone to complete a sentence before they were interrupted by someone else. Much of the programme was an ugly cacophony as people tried to shout above each other to get their point across. Some of the participants couldn't even be



Too much footie?

bothered to compete so they didn't say anything. For all we know, one of these people had the answer to the meaning of life and we never got to hear it. Perhaps if everyone stopped going on telly to talk about every conceivable problem under the sun, they might actually have an opportunity to have some sex and discover it's alright. The programme did at least demonstrate a sort of sexual equality. The women wouldn't shut up either.

Jokes about policemen selling drugs have long been the staple diet on the London comedy circuit, along with numerous allusions to people in police custody falling down the stairs. I remember a friend of mine who worked in the Metropolitan police telling me that lumps of cannabis would shrink magically to the size of peas as they made their journey to be exhibited in court. How gratifying for us comics to discover that all our jokes have not been in vain and some policemen have finally taken up the challenge. Add to that the policeman who faked a car accident to cover up the fact that they'd been racing police cars on a quiet night and soon the police won't have to bother with the general public - they'll just be arresting each other all the time.

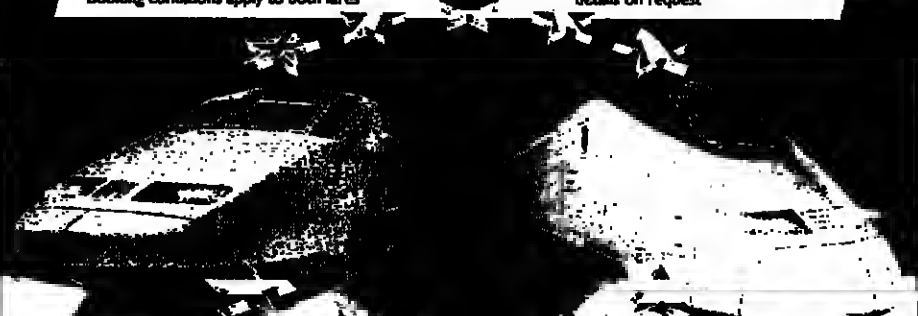
Women always complain that there's too much football on television. I'm not one of them, as I like a good watch myself. However, I would like to complain that there is too much football on the news at the moment. If they're not fighting or firing, footballers are suffering the folly of a minority of tumpen sado-fascists with their pathetic flags, off to make trouble in Europe. I know Desmond Morris said football was tribal, so when are the police going to herd all the ones that want a ruck into an empty field, let them get on with it and just leave the rest of us in peace?

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## Major to Blair: lead, follow, or get out of the way

Since Tony Blair was elected Labour leader just over a year ago, he has commanded the political stage with a rare authority. Displaying immense political flexibility and ingenuity, he has wowed the nation. For 12 months, British politics has been about Tony Blair. The Tories have been no match: split on Europe, they have displayed all the symptoms of governmental fatigue. John Major has looked bedraggled, bemused and lacking the qualities needed to subdue and lead his fractious colleagues. Finally, in his brave decision to stand for re-election, he sought a fresh start and a measure of calm descended.

But this week's conference could hardly have started less well. Fresh from a magnificent week in Brighton, Mr Blair revealed his latest recruit: Alan Howarth, one of the more intelligent Tory MPs. Given all this, it is hardly surprising that the Tory conference was for the most part a subdued affair. The party feels old, bruised and hattered. Off-the-record conversations reveal a manifest sense of impending electoral doom. This year, for the first time for well over a decade, the conference for the smart influence-peddler in seen as Labour's.

John Major thus faced a mountain yesterday. In country and party alike, the prevailing view is that only a miracle can save the Tories at the next election. By the time he sat down 80 minutes later, he had given reasonable grounds for doubting the new common sense.

Already during the week, the Tories had displayed some symptoms of recovery. The divisions in Europe have grown less acute, partly

because the prospects for a single currency are receding on the horizon. There was also clear evidence that Michael Portillo, rather than the way of Tony Blair in the early Eighties, has gone a speech too far. His crude jingoism and dishonest anti-Europeanism has alienated a section of those who previously supported him.

In his conference speech, Mr Blair sought to convince that Labour knows how to modernise Britain. Mr Major had a similar task. Have the Conservatives got anything more to offer the country than memories of the Eighties and longevity in office? Mr Major's oratorical performance paled in comparison with that of the Labour leader, but in content, it did not. On this evidence, the Tories not only have a case - they have a more coherent idea of their mission for the Nineties than Labour.

The core vision is that Britain is the enterprise centre of Europe. This has two aspects. First, it recognises that Britain is necessarily and beneficially part of Europe. There was the mandatory attack on federalism, but Mr Major spent most of his time seeking to persuade his audience of the need to understand Europe rather than dismiss it. The emphasis was distinctly pro-European. Second, it recognises that Britain's interests are not coterminous with or exhausted by its relationship with Europe. Britain exists not only in a European context, but also a global one - the yardstick is not only German competitiveness but East Asian and North American. The Tories are surely right here, and what follows is a powerful and coherent argument: deregulation, opposition to the



social chapter, low taxes and public spending, making Britain competitive and a hospitable home for a volume of inward investment which will drive out unemployment and allow us to afford an effective welfare system.

Of course, the reality is that in office, the Tories have been unable to deliver on either taxation or public spending. A party to power for 16 years will be judged more by its record than its reasoning. None the less, the vision is more convincing than Labour's. Mr Blair speaks with compelling passion of a kinder society and proposes an education drive to raise skills and employability, along with government determination to broker the construction of the information superhighway. Mr Major's vision is more globally aware, more embedded in the history and experience of the Eighties, and more respectful of the centrality of the market and competition.

In his speech, Mr Major combined this core vision with a powerful exposition of Tory values and philosophy. The battle lines are thus becoming clearer. This was an altogether more intellectually confident argument: there were no crude, unconvincing sideswipes against Mr Blair, but a clear delineation of the differences. The Tories, by this speech, are no longer mesmerised by Mr Blair but are beginning to find his measure.

Patches of clear blue water start to appear. Labour believes more government is part of the solution, the Tories that it is part of the problem. While the Tories advocate choice, Labour appears to restrict it: an example is the assisted

places scheme which Labour wants to abolish and the Tories will now double. The Conservatives favour the Union, Labour is committed to devolution. Mr Major ardently desires the end of whole categories of taxation, such as that on inheritance; Mr Blair won't be called a tax-raiser, but his tone is less sure. Mr Major approves Michael Howard's steel-toed approach to crime. Mr Blair may be stranded in his sneakers.

Of course, a conference speech does not make a successful election campaign, nor does a plausible vision of the future mean that it will inform the real actions of a government. But Mr Major has made a serious effort at turning the tide. It is possible at least now to see a story the Conservatives can tell the voters: if you want to vote conservative, vote for the Conservatives, not the pretenders.

Mr Major lacks Mr Blair's charisma, but the content of this speech requires Mr Blair to react. Will he emphasise further his conservatism and his sobriety, or will he risk more radicalism?

Labour has now been reminded that whatever Mr Major's shortcomings as a leader, he has qualities. He is authentic, honourable and decent. He lays bare "honourable scars of battle" to contrast with the inexperience of his opponent. At the end of the day, he is more representative of the British people than the public school- and Oxford-educated former barrister who leads the Labour Party. Come the next election, this could yet count. It is well to remember that Blair versus Major is light years away from Wilson versus Home in 1964.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Obstacles to European free trade agreement with the US

From Mr Michael Johnson  
Sir: Further liberalisation of trade between the European Union and North America, ultimately perhaps with some form of free trade area, has a lot to commend it economically and politically.

However, Andrew Marr reports ("Prodigal's return disguises lack of any new thinking", 11 October) that the Foreign Secretary or his supporters presented this proposal in Blackpool as "a reverse gear for European integration". If a new transatlantic trade agreement is seen as an alternative to further integration in the EU, that idea is a dangerous delusion for five reasons:

1. Transatlantic trade liberalisation, even a full FTA, would be restricted to the economic field, where EU internal policy is already largely integrated. It could not in any way be a counter to the pressures in next year's intergovernmental conference for further integration, which will be mainly in the defence, political and social fields.

2. The US would not discuss full-scale trade liberalisation with the EU unless it covered such areas as access to the European audiovisual market, telecommunications and above all agriculture. France and some other member states would object strenuously. On the (unlikely) hypothesis that France did agree to early

transatlantic liberalisation in these areas, it would exact a massive price in other areas of EU policy.

3. It is doubtful how far the US wants to go in this direction anyway. America would have to make important concessions on, eg, banking rights and its long-standing restrictions on coastal shipping. There seems no conspicuous enthusiasm among American politicians for a transatlantic FTA. In the multilateral negotiations which led to the establishment of the World Trade Organisation the US settled, for domestic reasons, for a disappointing degree of reform of tariffs and agricultural policy, and stood aside from the recent WTO agreement on financial services.

4. If the US were to take on the domestic lobbies on these issues for the purposes of a bilateral agreement with Europe, the matching benefits would have to be huge. America would demand higher standards from a bilateral agreement than from one in the WTO framework. The obvious precedent is the NAFTA agreement of 1993 with Canada and Mexico. Apart from tariffs, standards, etc, NAFTA imposes far-reaching obligations in areas such as investment, services, government procurement, intellectual property and travel restrictions, which are much less comprehensively dealt with

in the WTO. There would be little advantage for the US in negotiating with Europe if it did not get real bilateral concessions in these matters.

5. Not only would the EU (including Britain) have to bite on some unwelcome negotiating bullets; in some of these sensitive subjects the European Commission, according to opinion 1/94 of the Court of Justice, does not have exclusive negotiating rights. If there were to be a serious transatlantic negotiation for real liberalisation and if Europe were adequately to protect its legitimate interests in that process, then Europe would have to negotiate as one for an outcome based on single agreed standards. The perverse result (from the Tory party's point of view) would be an unavoidable increase in the EU's central negotiating powers. Yours faithfully, MICHAEL JOHNSON, London, N6 11 October

From Mr Ernest Wistrich  
Sir: The Foreign Secretary's championing of a North Atlantic free trade area at the Conservative Party conference, against the background of opposition to any further integration within the European Union, is doomed to failure. The Conservative government tried this before in 1958

by urging the EEC to negotiate a free trade area with the newly formed Efta as an alternative to further European integration. This was rejected by the EEC then as a device to destroy the EEC's commitment to "an ever closer union of the European people", a phrase used in the Rome treaty to explain the objective of the EEC to proceed ultimately to full political and economic union. When Britain failed in that attempt, we decided to join the EEC and were ultimately admitted on the clear understanding that we accepted its political objectives. The same commitment to ever closer union appears in the preamble of the Maastricht treaty to which Britain is a signatory. If we now refuse to go along with our partners towards political as well as economic union, we are certainly unlikely to persuade them to abandon it for the sake of a wider free trade area.

Our government should make a clear and honest choice. Either we carry out our commitment to further integration, implicit in the Maastricht treaty, or we decide to let the others go ahead without us by leaving the union and seeking a free trade association with it instead. Yours faithfully, ERNEST WISTRICH, London, NW3 11 October

### Good value at opera houses

From Mr Jeremy Isaacs  
Sir: Raymond Gubbay's uncharacteristically intemperate attack on the Royal Opera House is totally unjustified ("Royal Opera House 'elitist and wasteful'", 11 October). His allegations are without foundation.

Our stage practice has been and is the subject of continuing critical review and improvement. Our productivity is extremely high and our costs, as every other international opera house bears witness, extremely low. And opera lovers, from opera slips to orchestra stalls, come to Covent Garden because they enjoy themselves.

I wish Mr Gubbay well at the Royal Albert Hall, where the Royal Opera gave *Ballo in Maschera* last season. But he need not publicise his wares by irresponsibly denigrating others. Yours faithfully, JEREMY ISAACS, General Director, Royal Opera House, London, WC2 11 October

From Mr John Nickson  
Sir: It is rich of Raymond Gubbay and Patrick Deuchar to accuse the English National Opera of being "elitist and icy" (report, 11 October). They are offering 20,000 people the chance to see a semi-staged *La Bohème* at the Albert Hall for up to £37. Nearly 45,000 people are packing the Coliseum to see Jonathan Miller's fully staged *Carmen*. Sixty per cent of them are paying between £5

and £25 to see the genuine article and enjoy real value for money.

Moreover, ENO's loyal audience has given almost £1m in individual donations in the past year. These facts speak volumes. Yours faithfully, JOHN NICKSON, Director of Public Affairs, English National Opera, London, WC2

From Mr Philip Parr  
Sir: Raymond Gubbay and Patrick Deuchar have certainly opened up a can of worms in attacking London's two large-scale opera houses for their elitism, icy atmosphere and exorbitant costs.

But are productions of classic masterpieces in the Albert Hall a long-term solution? From the very first, Spitalfields Market Opera, London's new chamber opera house, has confronted the issues of cost and accessibility. Our opera house, due for completion in February 1996, has a total construction cost of £500,000. Careful management of staff and methods of working mean an average ticket price of only £12.

Our doors are open to a new, enthusiastic audience who have joined with opera lovers to support the first opera house in London to discard the tags of elitism and expense. Yours faithfully, PHILIP PARR, Artistic Director, Spitalfields Market Opera, London, E1 11 October

### A more efficient blood service

From Mr John Adey  
Sir: Your article "Blood service crisis as staff exodus bites" (9 October) contains several inaccuracies. We are not proposing to close any blood centres. All existing centres would remain open but the processing and testing of blood donations, currently conducted in all 15 centres, will be consolidated in 10.

The proposals for reorganising the service came not from independent consultants but from working groups of blood service staff. Outside consultants were used to analyse data.

The aim of the proposals is not "to trim £10m from the annual budget" but to produce a blood service that is even more safe, reliable and efficient. Your claims about staff losses imply that centres are understaffed or contain inappropriately qualified personnel. This is not the case and the blood service continues to maintain its usual high standard.

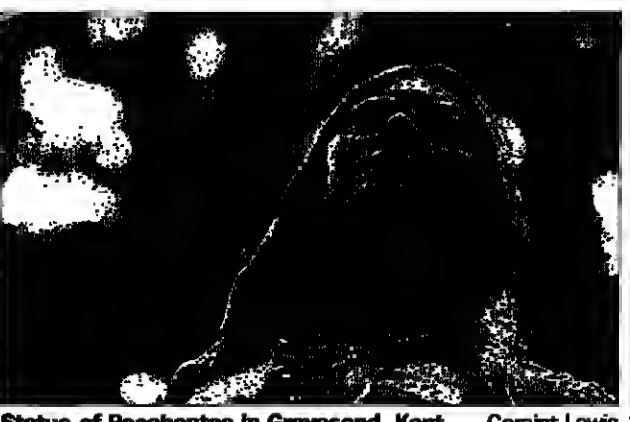
Finally, the NHS is not making money out of blood donors. The amount of blood collected is determined by the needs of hospitals to provide transfusions. The plasma from blood donations can also be used to manufacture blood products such as Factor VIII and albumin for use in the treatment of patients. If a surplus of any blood product remains after satisfying NHS demand then it may be offered for sale abroad. The receipts from such sales come back into the NHS and offset the cost to the taxpayer of manufacturing the product. Donors have always indicated that the sale abroad of any surplus is preferable to the alternative, which is to burn it. Yours sincerely, JOHN ADEY, Chief Executive, National Blood Service, Walford, Hertfordshire

### Extra work time remains hidden

From Mr John Monks  
Sir: Paul Wallace's article ("Biggest rises for better-off widen the earnings gap", 29 September) reports on hours worked by non-manual workers, including those in professional and managerial jobs. The NES is based on employers' reports of contracted hours, including paid overtime. This captures most of the excessive hours worked by blue-collar workers. However, the survey severely underestimates the hours many non-manual workers work.

This is because many non-manuals - especially those in managerial and professional jobs - do not get paid overtime but find it impossible to get the job done within their contracted hours. The Central Statistical Office's Labour Force Survey, which asks individuals how many hours they work, found in spring 1994 that 34 per cent of full-time non-manual employees reported working 45 hours or more a week. The April 1994 New Earnings Survey showed that employers reported only 5 per cent worked these very long hours. The difference is accounted for by people working beyond their contracted hours without extra pay.

These trends can only widen further the gap between the employment conditions of most UK workers and workers in the rest of Europe. Yours sincerely, JOHN MONKS, General Secretary, TUC, London, WC1



Statue of Pocahontas in Gravesend, Kent. Geraint Lewis

### Better way to use Disney cash

From Mr Hilary Kilborn  
Sir: Maybe I am in a minority, but I am disgusted by the news that the £9,000 donated to St George's church in Gravesend by Disney ("Disney fans follow the trail of Pocahontas legend to Kent", 11 October) is to be used to floodlight the church and Pocahontas's statue.

### Heritage costs

From Mr George J. Levy  
Sir: Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, is to be congratulated for robustly opposing the Treasury's suggestion, contained in a leaked letter, that National Lottery funds should be used to relieve the Government of its financial obligation to the arts (report, 11 October). At the Conservative Party conference Mrs Bottomley also made the welcome announcement that by building on the success of the National

Lottery she wanted "every schoolchild to have the opportunity to share our splendid artistic heritage". But this very important initiative for "young people" might well be in danger if inadequate core funding, by the Treasury, necessitates continuing staff cuts and room closures in museums, where these heritage objects are normally displayed. Yours faithfully, GEORGE J. LEVY, H. Blairman and Sons, London, W1 12 October

Why should any church be floodlit? Why spend this money on something that will be an ongoing maintenance burden on church funds as well as a continuous drain on precious energy resources? Why not spend the money to forward the cause of racial equality and harmony or in some similarly useful area? Yours sincerely, HILARY KILBORN, London, SE12

### Out-of-date picture of Peru

From Mr George Nicholson  
Sir: I am writing to you concerning Virginia Ironside's "Dilemmas" in Section Two (5 October) which unfortunately misleads readers into believing that Peru is "a country fraught with danger".

I would like to inform Virginia Ironside, "horrid" Christine and Dominique Young that an estimated 500,000 foreign people will visit Peru this year. Last year alone, according to the British consulate in Lima, Peru hosted an estimated 1,500 British visitors, among them 120 students. Apart from occasional minor problems such as local property and theft - common to all major cities - none has reported any of the problems one would fear after reading today's "Dilemmas", neither to the British consulate nor to the British Council.

As well-informed readers have realised, the image portrayed does not match present-day Peru at all. Government policies and drastic legislation passed in Peru since 1990 have dramatically curbed terrorism, drug trafficking and crime. Consequently, the number of foreign visitors has increased in comparison with 1994 and various projects recruiting young foreigners are being implemented. Yours faithfully, GEORGE NICHOLSON, Consul General, Embassy of Peru, London, SW1

### English as the PC speaks it

From Ms Eleanor Harris  
Sir: Who needs grammar lessons in this day and age ("Let the children sing and squawk", 12 October) when we have spell, thesaurus and grammar checks on our PCs? It is just a shame that they are all in American and that the grammatical suggestions cannot be understood.

Perhaps, with the introduction of Gillian Shepherd's "read out loud in your best Queen's English" exam, we will see the introduction of speech CD-Roms we can use to practice face exercises on how to get the best drawl while we reorganise the teaching of the English language.

Language change constantly. All languages stem from a basic structure which should not be forgotten, but they also move with the times. If teachers had more time to teach smaller classes then we could all learn proper grammar and still be able to enjoy the fun of gaining knowledge of the vast intricacies of the English language. Yours faithfully, ELEANOR HARRIS, Dorking, Surrey 11 October

### Avoidance tactics

From Mr Charles Ogilthorpe  
Sir: It is clear to me that Alan Howarth resigned after the Labour conference and before the Conservative conference in order to avoid both. Yours faithfully, CHARLES OGILTHORPE, Woking, Surrey 12 October

## DAVID AARONOVITCH

### Dress 'em all

Take a close look at the photograph above this column and you will see a striking resemblance between me and the Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo. Remove my glasses and braces and what have you got? A fine English fighting man, that's what. And the same is true of Michael. Obsolete the quiff and he possesses the rubbery good looks of an Action Man that a careless child has left too close to the fire. You can imagine boys having bours of good clean fun dressing him in various uniforms and undressing him again.

Nor is this resemblance accidental. As Michael made clear in his splendid speech this week, he feels passionately about this nation and its soldiers. We both do - it is bred in the bone. Down the centuries, Aaronovitches and Portillos have fought side by side in this country's historic wars. Our forefathers pulled the yew together at Crecy, so that Aquitaine might be free. They stood shoulder to shoulder at Rorke's Drift. The lament of an Aaronovitch's mouth-organ and a Portillo's squeeze-box drifted over the trenches of Flanders on Christmas Day 1917.

And don't think that we would not also have served, had we been so honoured. Only Michael's lumbago (and his commitments as a consultant to the oil industry) kept him out of the Falklands affair. A small piece of floating cartilage, sustained in Balliol College's third XI's 9-0 drubbing at the hands of mighty St Peter's, destroyed my military ambitions. Otherwise, an Aaronovitch and a Portillo would have stood side-by-side at the bar of the Upland Goose in 1982, drinking a toast to victory.

Little wonder that Michael should have attacked the possible future plans of some European (I never quite caught the name) to take over our army. Unmartial races, lacking our discipline and enlightened generalship (such as the French and Germans) cannot be given a veto over our boys. Otherwise, as Mike says, we will end up out fighting any wars; "British soldiers want to fight

for Britain, not for Brussels," he rightly declared. How disappointing then, that at the end of a triumphant week, one big black cloud should appear on the clear blue Portillo skyline. It has come to light that, despite our unparalleled prowess in things military, nobody in Britain actually wants to fight for anybody. Well, nobody suitable anyway. The infantry are 1,200 chaps short, with 250 vacancies in the Paras alone. The defence correspondent of the BBC (who sounds like a chain-smoker and a seriously wasty one to boot), told listeners that the problem was "today's unfit youth". In the days of rickets and polio, there was no shortage of strapping young things aching to join up, but the NHS and McDonald's have weakened the stock.

The MOD answer is to recruit Gurkhas to fill the gaps. These plucky little fellows with their 12-inch weapons certainly appeal to everyone who loves soldiers. But are they the solution? I should have thought that they were too light to be Paras - it would take them much longer to float to earth. By the time they arrived, the battle would be over, leaving them wandering about looking for something to sink their kukris into.

But the main problem is this. If Britons will not fight for Brussels, why are we so optimistic that Nepalese tribesmen fresh from milking yaks on the Roof of the World will sacrifice all in defence of Sutton Coldfield? I hesitate to give advice to the exalted Mr P, but does not the answer lie closer to home? If only the Defence Ministry and the Home Office could work together, they could easily come up with a plan for converting boot camps for young offenders into proper training centres for the army.

It was, after all, criminals in uniform that made this country great - on land and on the high seas. They fought under Admirals Nelson and Portillo at Trafalgar, for Wellington and Sir D'Arny Aaronovitch at Talavera and Badajoz. Imagine what they could do for Michael Howard and Michael Portillo today!

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

I do not believe that the threat of longer and longer periods of imprisonment across the board will deter habitual criminals. What deters them is the likelihood of being caught, which at the moment is small - Lord Chief Justice Taylor, attacking a Tory conference speech by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard.

The last of the gentleman politicians - Sir David Steel on the passing of Lord Home

The whole country is yearning for a public school prime minister who knows how to hold his knife and fork properly - Amberon Waugh on Tony Blair

She is obviously the Quentin Tarantino of the middle classes - Charles Denton, BBC head of drama, on the spate of Jane Austen adaptations

Bin, bin, bio. All those demands for funds to put deserving people through drama, law or art school, bin. All those befuddled requests to explain what fuck-me shoes are, bin. All those 20-page hand-written screeds explaining the meaning of life, bin. All those reproaches for things I didn't say, bin. glorious bin. All those demands for my favourite poem, recipe, book, colour, into my big new shiny black garbage bin ... Calloo callay! - Germaine Greer gives up answering letters

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. (Fax: 071-293 2856; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

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# Gloves on for Honest John, the great survivor

The Prime Minister's speech showed a self-confident man who could still pull off the awesome task of regaining the nation's trust

I ain't over. Those sleek magnates who have decided that Labour must inevitably form the next government would be well advised to make a few friendly calls on Tory ministers, just in case. John Major's speech was not, contrary to the common view, the best he has ever given. But it laid out with vital clarity the stakes and hopes that will dominate politics until the election. A fight is on.

Until he rose, this had been an incoherent conference. There was swagger and belligerence enough, but no real sense that the Tories believed their own propaganda. Ministers have been jousting for the post-Major succession, sending conflicting messages as a result. In private, they often seemed flat. Bright Tories on the left and right are agonising about how to reshape the party in opposition. The Alan Howard defection and reaction to Michael Portillo's speech sent just the wrong messages.

The Prime Minister has not wiped out these miseries, but he reminded all of us what a fighter he is; there was not the slightest quiver of defeatism or self-doubt. If you closed your eyes and took a deep



ANDREW MARR  
Columnist of the Year

breath you could almost believe him when he talked of a fifth election victory. He is going to use scare-tactics against Labour; but he has some quite scary scares. More than that, though, he painted a picture of a Conservative future which was compelling enough to be treated seriously. However you look at it, that was an hour well spent.

And he enjoyed spending it. For he seems what he is, a man who has finally throttled his private demons. For most of his premiership, he has been haunted by the danger of the Conservative Party breaking into two over Europe. This looks

less likely now than at any time since the heyday of Thatcherism.

Just as important, he has confronted the preparers of putsch. John Redwood, on the sidelines, and Michael Portillo, on the platform, seemed much less threatening figures than a year ago. Major's self-confidence was reflected in his subtle but unmistakable rebukes to Portillo for the tone of his speech; the Government must advance its case "firmly and courteously" and try to understand the thinking of continental politicians.

He has defeated the men of the right, even if the ideas of the right continue to spread. Even then, Major's anti-federalist but pro-European message was surer and straighter than ever before. He thinks he is winning these arguments. And he is.

Feeling more comfortable in his shoes enabled him to try to counter Alan Howard's attack on the brutishness of modern Toryism and answer Labour's sassy claim to have inherited the mantle of One Nationism. He did it not merely by asserting the truisms of Iain Macleod's brand of socially concerned Toryism but by

trying to make himself a living symbol of that embattled tradition. He spoke movingly of his father's business struggles and reminded us that "I know what it's like when the money for the week runs out by Thursday."

This matters because during modern general elections, politics is almost reduced to personality. The Tories want the next one to curl round the contrast between a plain, unheroic, self-made English commoner, the People's John, and a comfortable, slick, upper-class opponent, Islington Anthony. To pit classless Toryism against smugly, corporatist new Labour is a trick almost as cheeky as Labour's embrace of big business. It reverses the moral choice we expect to make. It's another example of our disorientating Nineties politics. But Labour would be wise to feel uneasy.

There are limits, of course, to the honesty of Honest John. All politicians promise to tell the plain truth; then promptly forget to do so; yesterday's speech was no exception. The Prime Minister promised to drive spending and taxes down, but then ran through a new list of spending com-

mitments on policing and education. Hard choices remain, for conference purposes, entirely abstract choices.

On tax, the promise of cuts was there, as it had been in Kenneth Clarke's campaign speech the day before. But look at his priorities; it is hard to understand how One Nation classlessness fits with making the abolition of inheritance tax a top priority.

On education, he lauded choice and excellence for everybody. But until he is ready to allow considerable numbers of surplus places in schools, most children will have little or no choice. Doubling the assisted places scheme was a shrewd way of opening a bigger gap with Labour. But the more children who get out of comprehensive schools, the worse those schools will be. He may regard it as a price worth paying; but to pretend that there is no social price was not an example of the plain truth-telling Major had advertised a few minutes earlier.

On Scotland, the equation of Labour proposals to allow tax bands to vary into the unequivocal statement that Scottish families would pay £5 extra a week was typ-

ical politician-speak. So was the dismissal of the Scottish parliamentary proposals as the result of Labour gutlessness, sweeping to one side the constant preferences of most people there for decades. On the constitution generally there was a dismal failure of the Tory imagination for which the party will one day pay heavily.

So across some of the key policies there are examples of the evasions and "doublethink" for which Major criticised Tony Blair. Philosophically, he is no more coherent than the Labour leader; like all politicians he wants low taxes and high spending, talks tough, then equivocates.

The odd thing, though, is that his fudges and inconsistencies don't make him seem a cynical or silly man. He appears consistent, the same all the way through, a politician who believes in himself - even if at times he has been the last person in the country who does. Because of that, it isn't quite impossible that Major will persuade people to trust him again. He is the great survivor of modern politics. His task is still awesome, but after yesterday, anyone who writes him off is a simpleton.

## The quintessential English gentleman

PROFILE: Trevor McDonald Our top newsreader is a throwback to another age, says Peter Popham

The black man with the Scottish name who is more English than the English has had an interesting week. Instead of merely reading the news, Trevor McDonald has been making it.

First, on Sunday, came the diabolical proposal to elbow McDonald's programme, *News At Ten*, off its venerable 10 o'clock plinth and shove it 15 minutes deeper into the night to make room for an extended bout with Cracker, Robbie Coltrane's charismatic psychologist. Amid a great squawking of public concern, the Independent Television Commission threatened a large fine, whereupon the idea was withdrawn.

On Wednesday, before the dust had settled, up popped Mrs Shephard at Blackpool to announce the latest Tory attempt to turn back the cultural clock. This one involved appointing a steering group to head a "Campaign for the Better Use of the English Language". McDonald was to head a committee of "bright, energetic people" from business, trade unions, sport and journalism, with an initial budget of £250,000.

If the first announcement was an uncalculated slight, the second was recognition that, after three years as the solitary anchorman of ITN's most important programme, and about

makes it all better, no matter how dreadful the news he has had to pronounce. Nobody since Richard Baker has filled the role with such aplomb.

As much the most prominent black person in the media, McDonald can be seen as a harbinger of the future, when blacks will be represented in television and print in rough proportion to their presence in the population. But a more gloomy view is that he is more correctly seen as a figure from the past - the man from the colonies who relates to Britain as the mother country with a sort of uncomplicated devotion simply not possible for black people born here.

He was born 55 years ago in Trinidad, a small island set apart from the rest of the West Indies geographically, and with a long roll call of distinguished Anglophiles to its name, including VS Naipaul, CLR James and Sir Learie Constantine. "It was a backwater of the empire," McDonald says, "but with a cosmopolitanism that would do credit to New York; people there were always looking for a wider field abroad. I remember sitting in the dark Caribbean evenings reading Dickens, Thackeray, Hazlitt... Naipaul said something about Trinidadians being people without history, and as a result you begin to admire the history of others. You fall back on Trafalgar, and so on. One is drawn ineluctably to the metropolitan centre."

His father worked in the island's oil refinery and raised pigs. He cherished vast ambitions for his four children, of whom McDonald was the eldest. He bought engineering manuals home from work and made his son read them instead of comics; on balmy Sundays, he would drag him off the cricket field and back to his books.

While still a child, McDonald fell under the spell of the BBC World Service, and after a degree in international politics at the University of the West Indies and a stint on Trinidad's radio and television, he came to London in 1970 and joined the BBC. He stayed with the World Service for three years, played cricket for their team, the Bushmen, and established the reputation as a convivial, clever, non-threatening person that has carried him along since.

From the BBC, he joined ITN. A journalist who remembers him when he was ITN's diplomatic correspondent in Brussels points out that television, from time to time, comes in two types: those who mug up as little as possible for their on-camera spots, and those who insist on learning everything they can about a story and winning it down to the essentials. McDonald, he says, was emphatically one of the latter. He subsequently filed reports for ITN from around the world - high points



Mr Feelgood: his last recorded error was saying the hostage John McCarthy had been brought home by the RAC

Peter Macdliarmid

He plays that old newscaster's role - televisual balm for the nation's soul

the same span as the most popular newsreader in Britain, McDonald has become a force in the land. But a force for what, exactly?

A force for niceness is the obvious but inadequate reply. McDonald has a reputation for being pleasant which rivals Gary Lineker's. Never booked, never sent off, his last recorded mistake was when he said the hostage John McCarthy had been brought home, not by the RAF but the RAC. Someone like Jeremy Paxman splits people into those who love him and those who hate him. Trevor McDonald does the opposite: he positively binds people together. He plays that old newscaster's role, the embodiment of reassurance, healer of wounds, televisual balm for the nation's soul. With his square specs, short-pile rug of receding grey hair and slow granite smile, he

included the fall of the Berlin Wall, the release of Nelson Mandela (he got the first interview) and, most famously, a half-hour exclusive, after the invasion of Kuwait, with Saddam Hussein.

The solidity and breadth of his journalistic career means it is hard to imagine McDonald going down the Martyr Lewis road, demanding more positive news coverage and writing soppy books about animals in the news. Staring into a camera, reading from an autotape and occasionally swivelling one's head pensively to the left may look like a dumb way to earn a living, but his years out in the field have left McDonald with a good understanding of the resonance of the reports he musters. This makes it all the sadder that he has failed to prevent *News At Ten* being taken

downmarket, with a rising proportion of trivial, sensational and voyeuristic reports.

This failure brings us back in the initial conundrum - McDonald is a force in the country, but for what? A large part of his appeal lies in the fact that, like Richard Baker, he exudes uncomplicated self-satisfaction - eminently shuggable, quintessentially suburban, born to commute, to stand rounds in the saloon bar, to hail colleagues as "dear boy" and complain when tired of feeling "absolutely buggered". He has achieved the miracle that liberal people in the Fifties and Sixties hoped would become commonplace in a multi-racial Britain - the colour of his skin has become irrelevant. But in the middle of the Nineties, does that make him a beacon for the future - or a relic of the past?

## Who is Michael Howard really frightening?

Judges make mistakes, but it is no answer to hand sentencing to politicians, warns Lord Donaldson

Speeches at party conferences are intended to encourage the faithful and, if possible, to make converts of the undecided. Penal policy is intended to protect the public and reduce crime, while ensuring that the victims of crime and the accused are treated fairly. These political and judicial objectives are wholly different. The means of achieving them may be the same, but not necessarily so.

With this in mind I read Michael Howard's speech to the Tory party conference. I found much with which few would disagree.

He wants fewer criminals to be cautioned. Quite right. In the case of minor crime and a first offender, a caution may be effective. But a caution in the case of a serious crime or a second offence is quite a different matter. It sends the wrong messages and fosters the belief that you can get away with crime.

He wants fewer criminals out on bail. Quite right. But until the alleged criminal has been tried, we do not know whether he is a criminal. If he is innocent, there can be no greater injustice than to have denied him bail. Judges and magistrates must be left with the discretion to balance justice to the accused with the need to protect the public. Sometimes they will get it

wrong. If we can reduce the errors so much the better, but Mr Howard does not say how this can be done.

Mr Howard claims that prison works. The evidence for this is said to be the drop in recorded crime. No one doubts that in appropriate cases, deterrent sentences can make criminals think twice. No one doubts that keeping dangerous people in prison protects the public. What is more questionable is whether figures for recorded, as against actual, crime are a true index of the success of imprisonment. The less confidence that the public has in the police to bring the criminal to justice, the less crime will be reported.

The true answer is that provided by Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice. Persistent criminals take account of two factors: the chance of being caught and what happens if they are apprehended. At present, far the most important is the risk of being caught. If, as many criminals believe, there is virtually no such risk, harsher penalties are irrelevant.

Mr Howard says that too many guilty men walk free from our courts because our lawyers are masters of using procedures to win their cases. He says that he ought to know the ways of lawyers because he is one. What he ought to know, but appears to have forgotten, is that it is far better that a

guilty man should walk free than an innocent one should be convicted. He should know better than to suggest that, under the present rules, trials are games of monopoly under which you go free because you managed to avoid the square marked "jail".

Mr Howard says that for the Tory party it is the victim's interests that must come first, not those of the vil-

**This proposal is an epic constitutional change which should be resisted by all who value justice**

lain. Who could disagree? But justice requires that great care be devoted to identifying the villains. Anything less would be lynch law.

But it is when he turns to sentencing policy that Mr Howard really breaks new ground. He says that release from prison comes too soon. A robber who receives a sentence of two

years may be out in one. How does this come about? Fixed sentences of imprisonment have always been subject to remission for good behaviour. That makes sense. Prison discipline cannot be maintained if it makes no difference whether the prisoner riots or co-operates. But this remission need not be anything like half the sentence. This is a very recent innovation. It came about simply because there were more prisoners than the prisons could hold.

Mr Howard now proposes virtually to abolish remission for good conduct. He does not say whether this will apply to existing prisoners, which would be a gross injustice. Nor does he say how the system could cope with an increased prison population. He appears to have given no thought to the problem of maintaining prison discipline. Of course he has a point. But good behaviour must bring some reward.

Mr Howard seeks to justify this reform on the grounds that he is supporting the judges. He says that the changes will enable the judges to mean what they say when they pass sentences. But other reforms that he proposes belie this claim. One of the essential skills of the good sentencing judge is to be able to spot the exceptional case in which a habitual offender can be reformed by being

given a chance. Mr Howard proposes minimum sentences which would prevent judges from taking this course.

Far more serious is a proposal that two convictions for certain offences shall automatically lead to a life sentence. Release from prison in the case of a life sentence depends not on the decision of a judge but on that of the Home Secretary. Whether this will strike terror into the hearts of criminals, I do not know. But it terrifies me.

Our judges may make mistakes in sentencing but they can be put right on appeal. And however mistaken they may be, they are not swayed by sustained campaigns either for or against particular types of crime or particular criminals. Judges seek to do justice. They seek to balance the interests of the victims of crime and of society against the human rights of criminals. I have no confidence that politicians seeking re-election can be trusted to do the same.

This proposal to transfer responsibility for the time which a criminal spends in prison from judges to politicians involves a constitutional change of epic proportions that should be resisted by all who value justice.

Lord Donaldson of Lynton was Master of the Rolls, 1982-92.

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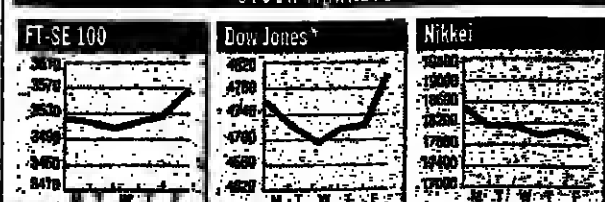
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Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12 Mth High	12 Mth Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3568.0	+44.2	+1.3	3570.8	2943.4	4.0
FTSE 250	3945.3	+8.9	+0.2	3991.3	3300.8	3.5
FTSE 350	1778.0	+18.0	+1.0	1778.3	1477.0	3.8
FT Small Cap	1964.7	+4.0	+0.2	1993.1	1678.8	3.3
FT All-Share	1754.2	+16.7	+1.0	1757.6	1465.2	3.6
New York	4812.9	+48.0	+1.0	4807.8	3674.8	2.4
Tokyo	17880.8	-90.8	-0.5	19992.4	14485.4	0.8
Hong Kong	9883.8	+198.6	+2.1	9940.0	6967.9	3.2
Frankfurt	2196.8	+38.7	+1.8	2317.0	1911.0	2.0
Paris	1817.0	+13.3	+0.7	2017.3	1721.8	3.8
Milan	9548.0	-33.0	-0.3	10911.0	8266.0	2.1

\*New Jones at 1439 hours. New Jones graph at 1330 hours.

**MAIN PRICE CHANGES**

FT-SE 350 companies (including investment trusts)				Falls			
Rises	Price(p)	Change(p)	%Change		Price(p)	Change(p)	%Change
Schroders	1368	88	6.8	Caradon	203	8	3.8
Denka Bus Sys	580	28	4.9	Trafalgar House	27	1	3.6
Schroders NW	1105	50	4.7	BFB Industries	283	10	3.4
Polypipe	156	7	4.7	Wessex Water	335	11	3.2
HSBC Holdings	(11987.5	38.5	4.3	Worl Group	253	8	3.1

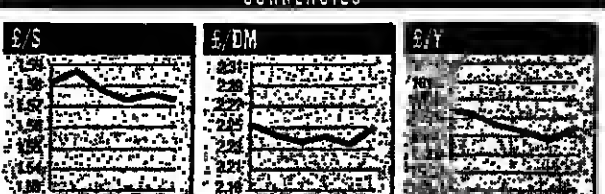
**INTEREST RATES**



Money Market Rates			Bond Yields *			
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond (%)	Year Ago
UK	6.89	6.91	8.15	8.53	8.33	8.41
US	5.81	5.75	8.05	7.63	6.41	7.83
Japan	0.34	0.31	2.90	4.69	3.62	5.04
Germany	4.00	4.00	8.61	7.56	7.28	7.91

\*Bank Yields: 12 Mth, 24 Mth, 36 Mth, 48 Mth, 60 Mth, 72 Mth, 84 Mth, 96 Mth, 108 Mth, 120 Mth.

**CURRENCIES**



Commodity	Yesterday's Close	Today's Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5723	-0.12	1.5812
\$ (New York)	1.5745	-0.25c	-
DM (London)	2.2500	+1.32p	2.4386
Yen (London)	158.41	+Y0.50	157.98
E Index	84.5	+0.5	88.8

\*\*New York rates and West November at 1430 hours.

**OTHER INDICATORS**

Commodity	Yesterday's Close	Today's Change	Year Ago
Oil Brent \$	16.21	+0.38	15.66
Gold \$	384.00	-0.50	386.90
Gold £	244.23	-0.13	244.68
RPI	150.6	3.9pc	2.4
GDP	-	2.8pc	4.1
Base Rate	-	6.75pc	5.25

Source: Datastream

**IN BRIEF**

**Samsung plans London HQ**

South Korean electronics giant Samsung has confirmed it would move its European headquarters and training centre to London from Frankfurt. The move, announced yesterday during the Queen's opening of Samsung's new £450m plant at Cleveland, will create up to 500 jobs by the year 2000. The company has bought an 8.83 acre site at Hounslow.

**Premiums down again**

Insurance premiums are falling again after a slight upturn during the summer, according to the AA. The average cost of building insurance is now £133 a year, down 5.7 per cent since July 1994 - in spite of the addition of 2.5 per cent insurance premium tax in the 1994 Budget. Home contents insurance premiums are down 4.5 per cent over the same period, while comprehensive motor insurance costs 4.3 per cent less - an average of £351. The report comes just as the insurance industry is launching a campaign against any plans the Chancellor might have to double the tax to 5 per cent next month.

**Job cuts at RJR Nabisco**

Tobacco and food giant RJR Nabisco is moving its headquarters of its international tobacco operations to Geneva, and cutting 575 jobs at its American operations as part of a worldwide restructuring which the company says will add \$150m a year to its bottom line. The changes will mean a \$160m charge against fourth-quarter earnings.

**Aran rejects £182m Arco bid**

Aran Energy, the Irish oil company, has called on shareholders to reject as inadequate the revised £182m offer from Arco of the US. City analysts expect the battle for Aran to move forward next week with a potential "white knight" bid from Statoil, the Norwegian state-owned energy group. Statoil is considering entering the fray but has given no firm commitment.

**'Scope for rate cut' after US prices data**

US consumer price inflation rose by 0.1 per cent in September, somewhat lower than the market had expected, but core prices by 0.2 per cent as had been anticipated. The monthly increase took the yearly all-items rate up to 2.5 per cent. According to Mark Cliffe at HSBC Markets, this meant there was still scope for lowering interest rates.

**Buyouts expected at British Coal**

British Coal named management buyout teams as the preferred bidders for its British Fuel subsidiary, the last of its major trading arms to be offered for sale. Heptagon, a company led by executives including David Fort and backed by Apax Partners, is the likely buyer for most of the company. Management have also emerged as the preferred bidder for the remainder of British Fuels - Cawoods of Northern Ireland.

**Country Casuals fights £26m bid**

Tom Adam, chairman of the women's clothing company Country Casuals promised a tough fight against the £26.8m takeover bid launched by his predecessor, John Shannon. "We intend to contest the offer vigorously," he said yesterday. "As Country Casuals' former chairman and chief executive, Mr Shannon is fully aware of the group's potential."

**Flotation plan: Benefits for policyholders and customers if company abandons historic mutual status**

**Norwich faces £1.7bn decision**

NIC CICUTTI

Up to 2.5 million Norwich Union policyholders look set to gain from a £1.7bn cash bonanza if they agree to allow the company to float on the stockmarket.

The windfall could mean average bonuses of between £600 and £700 per policyholder if the company abandons its mutual status by 1997.

Experts said yesterday that the flotation would allow the company to expand in a number of markets, most crucially the life sector in Europe and the Far East. The development of general insurance, where it already has a significant presence, would also be a major aim for Norwich Union.

The company yesterday refused to say whether it definitely intended to float. Allan Bridgewater, group chief executive at Norwich Union, said: "The board has been studying the possibility of de-mutualisation and flotation. This is a highly complex matter and a great deal of technical and legal work has to be done before a final decision can be made."

"The preliminary view of the board is that this course of action would produce significant benefits to members of the society and assist the overall development of Norwich Union."

Mr Bridgewater added that the amount of work involved in determining whether a flotation was possible meant that no public announcement would be possible until the middle of next year.

Those who may benefit from the flotation this time include with-profits policyholders,



The Norwich Union team (from left): Philip Scott, Albert Mills, Richard Harvey and Allan Bridgewater, chief executive

those who invest in endowments and pensions, and some unit-linked savers. Holders of general insurance products are not classed as members. Payments will be based on how much savers already have invested with Norwich Union.

It is believed no cut-off point

has been chosen for when new policyholders would be denied a share in any flotation. But sources stressed yesterday that investing in a Norwich Union policy now would only be allowed if it were suited to their financial needs. "If there is a windfall, it will be quite variable."

You might spend £200 to get a bonus of £10," one insider said. Bonuses may be paid either as a one-off cash sum or added to people's policies, as with Provident Mutual, now being taken over by General Accident.

Norwich Union's decision to lay the foundations for a flota-

tion comes amid warnings by Bacon & Woodrow, a large firm of independent actuaries, that the number of UK insurance firms may halve within the next decade.

It also follows extensive consultations with a large firm of strategic consultants which

were aimed at plotting a way ahead for the company in the next decade and beyond.

It is believed that senior Norwich directors have been told that by retaining the company's existing mutual status, whereby it is effectively owned by its policyholders, it risks slow commercial suffocation. Retaining a mutual would prevent the company from using shareholder funds and future rights issues to expand overseas.

Norwich Union's move echoes that of several building societies and life offices, including Halifax and Leeds, National & Provincial and Provident Mutual, which are also abandoning mutual status.

Paul Seymour, a former chief executive of Laurentian Life who is now a consulting partner at the actuaries Watson Wyatt, said: "There has been a lot of generalised talk about the constraints of mutuality."

"In the case of building societies there is also the argument that their members ought to receive a greater share of the profits that are being made."

"Generally, however, the arguments for abandoning mutual status for life companies do not apply in the same way. After all policyholders benefit directly from profits that are being generated."

"In the case of Norwich Union, the purpose of flotation would be for positive reasons. As another insurer, Commercial Union, has shown, expansion, possibly by acquisition, would be a key factor, especially in the European markets and the Far East."

**Stream of mishaps for insurer**

Norwich Union may be one of Britain's largest mutual insurers, but its reputation has been punctured by a steady stream of embarrassments, writes Nic Cicutti.

In the past five years, the company has:

- Faced heavy fines by the financial industry's regulator
- Been forced to pull its entire salesforce off the road because they were not up to scratch
- Lost a packet through over-exposure to the commercial property market.

Despite its sorry record, experts still believe Norwich

Union has the potential to expand and compete effectively in the world insurance markets.

Norwich Union, first established in 1797, is now the second-largest mutual with assets in its life fund of more than £25bn. Unlike most other mutuals, it has diversified in the past few years into general insurance and private medical health.

Its growth over the past 10 years has been explosive, fuelled in part by the boom in sales of personal pensions, with-profits endowments to mortgage borrowers, and a range of other life products and investments. But

in recent years its success has been at the cost of mistakes that have cost the company heavily.

Throughout the 1980s, Norwich Union's investment strategy banked heavily on the existing boom in commercial property. At one stage, some experts claim, up to 30 per cent of its portfolio was in that area. When the market crashed, NU was forced into rapid reverse, divesting itself of its loss-making investments.

Although the company says that its weighting is now below 10 per cent, this is still high by life industry standards.

Solvency has also been a problem, compounded by the company's foolishly large sales of with-profits bonds - contracts that impose a substantial financial strain because it is forced to match its assets to meet future potential liabilities.

The company was forced to abandon a market it had dominated and to switch enormous funds into government securities. In March last year, it was forced to pull 800 sales staff off the road after they were found to be too poorly trained. A month later it was fined £300,000 by its watchdog for a series of regulatory failures.

**£40m 'on tap' for Southern workers**

MARY FAGAN  
Industrial Correspondent

Employees at Southern Electric will make an estimated £40m profit from the staff ShareSave Scheme if the proposed £2.8bn takeover of the company by National Power goes ahead.

The National Power offer document, issued yesterday, shows that although the scheme is yet to mature, the 2,600 participants will be able to buy millions of Southern shares - mostly at £1.75 - and take advantage of the National Power £10.10 offer price.

The company refuses to reveal how they expect to treat Southern Electric executive share options if the takeover goes ahead, but it is expected that four directors of the regional firm could make about £1m from shares and exercising options, further fuelling the row over "fat cats".

Yesterday, unions added their voice to the debate over boardroom excess, lobbying a North West Water meeting in Manchester under the banner: "Public service not private sleaze". Members of Unison dressed as the "cats" called on North West shareholders to reject the planned £1.8bn takeover by Norwest. They claim thousands of jobs will be



Fat cats besieged: Unison demonstrators outside North West Water's egm in Manchester yesterday Photograph: News Team

lost and customers will lose out if it goes ahead.

National Power's offer document also confirmed that the company plans to sell £1bn worth of its power stations by the end of next March, with Eastern Group, recently acquired by Hanson, among the

front-runners to buy the plant. The company hopes the sale of stations will help to diffuse fears over concentration of power in the electricity industry.

It has also emerged that, if the National Power bid succeeds, the banks and other organisations advising National Power

will receive about £30m in fees.

The takeovers by National Power and North West Water are still subject to regulatory approval. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, is yet to decide whether these bids - and that made by PowerGen for Midlands Electricity - should be

referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

In spite of City criticism that North West's £1.8bn offer is "overpriced", the company gained approval from shareholders at yesterday's EGM and confirmed that it already owns 29.52 per cent of Norwest.

**Bid fever: Markets still rise on the back of another giant deal**

**Schroder speculation soars**

"The frothiest market we've seen for a long time," was one broker's verdict yesterday on the Footsie's 44-point rise, with talk of a top-100 bid to be announced on Monday and bid speculation which sent shares in Schroders, Royal Bank of Scotland and Standard Chartered soaring, writes John Willcock.

Shares in Schroders, the merchant bank, rose over 100p at one point and finished 88p up at 1368p. Despite a small volume of shares traded - just 252,000 - brokers put forward NatWest Group and Dutch bank ABN Amro as leading candidates to launch a bid.

Schroders is still 40 per cent owned by the Schroder family. A spokesman for the bank commented: "There was not a big volume of shares traded - it was just buying interest. We haven't been talking to anyone, and no one's been in touch with us."

The merchant bank is in the middle of a strategic review to

decide which bit of its securities arm to build up.

Elsewhere the market is expecting a big announcement from NatWest, possibly details on the sale of NatWest Bancorp, the group's American retail bank. The group is also known to be interested in expanding its investment banking and fund management activities both in London and New York. NatWest's shares rose 18p to 639p.



The FTSE 100 closed up 44.2 points at 3,568.0, just below its 13 September record close of 3,570.8, after earlier hitting a session high of 3,584.7. Dealers reacted to favourable US data and fear of being caught out by a mega-bid.

Financial stocks have been driven by bid speculation following this week's announcement that Lloyds Bank is merging with TSB. Royal Bank of Scotland is seen as an affordable target for the other high street banks like Abbey National, NatWest and Barclays, and its shares rose 20p to 522p with 4.3m shares traded.

Rumours this week that Banco Santander might sell its 10 per cent stake in the Scottish bank persisted yesterday. Some dealers mentioned a price of 720 p per share. Standard Chartered is headquartered in London with big operations in the Far East, and as such is also seen as a possible target for the high street banks. Its shares rose 20p to 518p.

**Ford's £250m site set to boost jobs**

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Ford's engine plant in South Wales has emerged as the likely location for a £250m investment that would double capacity and provide a huge jobs boost.

The company said it had not made a final decision, but sources said the promise of government aid has persuaded the US car giant to expand its UK facilities.

Ford has already put an extra £200m into its Dagenham, Essex, plant and has announced that some Fiesta production is to be shifted from Valencia, Spain, to the site.

Now the company is close to announcing, possibly during next week's London Motor Show, whether to invest in new power train facilities at Bridgend to produce units for the new Fiesta going on sale next month. Bridgend currently produces 550,000 16-valve engines a year,

with about three-quarters of them going abroad. They include units for Maudesons. "We have a significant investment under review but no final decision has yet been made," said a Ford spokesman yesterday. "Bridgend is part of the equation and any announcement could well create many new jobs. We hope to make an official announcement soon."

One analyst said Ford may produce bigger and smaller versions of its new lightweight Zetec 16-valve 1.25 litre engine. Ford's factory in Cologne was another contender for the investment, though this is now thought unlikely.

Ford has already been promised an £80m package of aid from the government and agencies towards a £400m investment by Jaguar in Birmingham. However, assistance towards the Bridgend investment would be substantially lower, probably in single figures.

**N&P payout at least £500**

JOHN WILLCOCK  
Financial Correspondent

National & Provincial Building Society members will receive cash payments proportional to balances of up to £50,000 following the £1.35bn takeover by Abbey National.

On Monday N&P will give details of the cash bonuses, which will include at least £500 to all 1.3m members with a minimum balance of £100 in the society at 28 April this year.

This payout will take up roughly half the £1.35m price tag, and the other half will be paid out to savers of more than 2 years standing in amounts to be revealed on Monday.

The planned merger between N&P and Abbey National will create Britain's second biggest mortgage lender with a 15.5 per cent share of the market.

N&P chief executive Alastair Lyons is also expected to confirm that employees and pensioners of the society will receive the same amount, but directors will gain no benefit from the merger. Directors will not be able to take part in Abbey National's share option scheme until two years after the merger.

Savers of two years standing will get more - depending on the size of their accounts. People who are both savers and borrowers will receive benefits in both capacities.

The merger is subject to the approval of the Building Societies Commission and N&P members, who will be balloted next year.

The N&P board is unanimously recommending approval and hopes the merger will be completed within a year. This is despite the fact that Abbey's approach was the first ever hostile bid for a mutual society. Members of the society will not receive any cash until the deal is completed.

Both sides insist there will be no compulsory redundancies in the branch network, though 120 branches will close.

The society said when the takeover was announced in July that some jobs may go, but compulsory redundancies would be extremely limited because of opportunities for retraining, a recruit freeze by both organisations and 10 per cent annual turnover of staff.

N&P's Bradford HQ will retain at least its current 1,400 staff. The combined operation will be second only to the recently merged Halifax and Leeds as a mortgage lender and will have 15m customers and 880 branches.



# business

## Mutual insurers must look hard at the future



"Nobody relishes being swallowed up in an earthquake, least of all the managers of what until now has been one of the staidest corners of the financial services industry"

Dust off your old life insurance policies, because they could be worth rather more than you think. Norwich Union's admission that it is looking at whether to become a public company sounds like the beginning of a revolution among the mutually owned insurance companies. Every substantial mutual insurer must now be forced to take a long hard look at its future as a result of the announcement.

For most of Britain, the first and most important question is not the philosophical one of whether mutual societies should be protected and preserved in aspic as a relic of an older and friendlier form of corporate governance than shareholder owned companies. Rather, how much will we get, and when?

This is a question of some importance to the insurance industry, too. If the public latches on to the idea that there are large gains waiting to be picked up, there could be a rush of new customers to the likeliest candidates for de-mutualisation, and slow starvation of business for the rest. Funds have been rocketing all year from one building society to the next as their customers have played a highly profitable game of spotting the ones to be bought or merged. The societies have taken to imposing minimum deposits of as much as £1,000 to damp down the intense speculation.

Industry experts were claiming yesterday that there will not be the same scale of rewards for the with-profits policyholders

who own the mutual insurers as for building society members, where the going rate for selling out to a bank is up to £50,000 for the largest depositors.

On paper, this caution might seem justified. It is possible to make a big single premium investment in an insurance policy, in the hope of receiving a future windfall, though at the cost of a high commission payment. But insurers are likely to give the highest rewards of a flotation to those who have kept their policies longest, and may give nothing to new customers, however large. If you are going to make money out of it, you are probably already a policyholder of long standing.

It is also true that only 10 per cent of the profits of a life insurance fund belong to the organisation that runs it, and it is on that basis the companies are valued. The paltry few hundred pounds offered by General Accident to the with-profits policyholders of Provident Mutual, which it is currently taking over, were cited yesterday as an example of the likely lower rewards available, compared with building societies.

But policyholders, particularly those in Norwich Union, should not allow the value of the insurers they own to be talked down in this way. Provident Mutual, Scottish Equitable and London Life, all mutual insurers taken over in the last few years, urgently needed the shelter of a powerful parent and their bargaining positions were weak.

Furthermore, their sale values were worked out by actuaries in reports so full of gobbledegook that there can hardly be a policyholder who understands them. They were not tested by offering the insurers concerned for sale in a competitive marketplace, not least because the management of a mutual society has the whip hand in deciding who to negotiate with, and does not like to be bought by an aggressive cost cutter who will sack everyone in sight.

There is more than a suspicion that the actuarial method of valuation consistently understates their real market worth. If a large and well known life insurer with a nationally known name such as Norwich or Standard Life converts to a public company or offers itself for sale in an open marketplace, it is certain that values will rocket above anything seen so far. But it will not happen overnight. Norwich, if it goes ahead, will not float before 1997, and if the pattern of the building societies is repeated it could take several more years for the momentum to build up.

The insurance industry itself was pouring cold water on the idea that this would be a rerun of the massacre of the building societies, where mergers, takeovers and conversions to banks are likely to have removed most of the big names by the end of the decade, if not before. The cautious reaction to the Norwich announcement is predictable. Nobody relishes being swallowed up in an

earthquake, least of all the managers of what until now has been one of the staidest corners of the financial services industry.

A rush of conversions of mutual insurers into conventional companies would certainly be a seismic event for them, coming at a time when the life insurance industry as a whole is already contracting rapidly under the pressure of competition and shrinking volumes of business.

The industry is fragmented and the players relatively small, with even the Prudential taking only 10 per cent of the market. The pressures are particularly acute on the medium size companies, where tougher regulation has forced massive investment in training schemes and expensive computers and software.

Sales have been hit by bad publicity from the pensions mis-selling scandals and tough competition from PEPs and Tessa's, which also have tax advantages that life insurance policies lost in 1984. And banks and even Marks & Spencer are moving aggressively into their markets.

Smaller and medium sized life companies are now a dying breed: long before the Norwich announcement, the consensus in the industry was that the total number of life companies would halve to about 50 by the beginning of the next decade. Many are asking themselves whether their real task now is to prepare themselves to be swallowed up by a bank, a building society or another much bigger insurer.

The Norwich move now puts the big mutuals into play as well. It is not only the first, but possibly the most interesting to the stock market among the mutual insurers, since it is closest in nature to the large publicly quoted composites that deal in life, pensions and general insurance. That gives Norwich a commercial value over and above its life funds. It has nevertheless suffered in comparison with the best of the quoted companies. Its performance has been lacklustre and its management unimaginative and slow to grasp the changes that are sweeping the industry, such as direct selling by phone.

So why is the management prepared to cast off the protection of mutuality, which makes a hostile takeover almost impossible? Naked ambition or a desire for the personal rewards of the private sector could be playing a part. But the key could be a realisation that in the UK's fragmented market even a company the size of Norwich may soon be faced with selling out or expanding to a more commanding position as the industry rationalises. Norwich, as it stands, may not be big enough to survive and prosper.

A flotation, which could raise new capital for Norwich as well as paying the policyholders who own it, would provide money to expand in Europe and to diversify further into general insurance in the UK. As building societies have found, mutual ownership has lost its attractions in a financial services industry that is changing at an astonishing pace.

Catering flop: Top chef's Covent Garden business forced to cease trading despite directors' cash injection of £270,000

## Roux food business runs into trouble

DAVID HELLIER

In the past few weeks, celebrity chef Albert Roux has been fighting a desperate battle to keep one of his trading companies alive - but it appears he has failed.

One of the trading companies of his business empire, Roux Lamartine - which has traded fruit, vegetables and poultry at London's New Covent Garden market for 14 years - has ceased trading.

An answerphone message at the company's offices last week explained the predicament: "Dear chiefs, we are sorry to tell you that after a long struggle we have had to close down. Thank you for your support."

The directors have asked accountants to convene a creditors' meeting later this month under section 98 of the Insolvency Act.

The company's latest set of accounts, which were filed earlier this month at Companies House, show that since April Mr Roux and another director, John Monk, provided more

than £270,000 to help the company meet its liabilities. But even this does not seem to have been enough to save the company whose debts are estimated at more than £1m.

The latest full-year results show a loss of £221,217, which is down on losses of £414,787 the previous year. The balance sheet shows no cash in the bank at the April year-end. A footnote to the accounts states: "Due to the breakdown and lack of documentation in the year ended 30 June 1994, it is not possible to identify separately distribution and administration expenses," the accounts say.

A spokesman for the accountants, Taylor, Coltham and Fry, said yesterday that the firm had not yet had the opportunity to fully review the books of the company. He declined to say whether the firm will be viable. He said it was impossible at this stage to say what would happen to the company but that it was inevitable that a liquidator would be appointed.

Albert Roux, who is a director of Roux Lamartine, was un-

available for comment. The Independent tried to contact him several times. Mr Roux is also listed as a director of a host of other catering companies, including Le Gavroche and Roux Fine Dining, which he recently sold to Compass, the catering services group.

The financial performance of Roux Restaurants, owned principally by the Roux family, improved in the past year - but only because of a near £1m profit on the disposal of discontinued operations. Although the company made an operating loss for the year of £553,747, it made a pre-tax profit of £343,280 after disposals. Its accumulated losses are still around £650,000.

Together with his younger brother Michel, Albert had a television series in England during the 1990s and wrote a book *At Home with the Roux Brothers*. The brothers first learned to cook from their mother; Albert was apprenticed at 14 as a pâtissier and later cooked for the British embassy in Paris.



Turned sour: Albert Roux, seen left with his brother Michel, has failed to save his Covent Garden market business

## OFT threat to TV retailer

NIGEL COPE

The Office of Fair Trading has threatened to revoke the consumer credit licences of Colovision, the Liverpool based television and video retailer, following a number of complaints from customers.

Shares in the company slumped 7p to 40p on the news though the company said it would issue a robust response to the notice. It has 21 days to submit a written or verbal case to the OFT.

Colovision's managing director, Alan Tinger, said the OFT statement was "a complete bombshell". He said: "We do not feel we have been treated fairly. We will be making a very robust response." The complaints include accusations of misleading price information and question marks over the effectiveness of product repairs.

It is the second time Colovision has run into trouble with the OFT. In 1993 the OFT said it had received 30 complaints from customers. Yesterday it said it had received a further 13 complaints between 1993 and December 1994. It also referred to 121 trading standards convictions between May 1989 and July 1995.

The "intended to revoke" notice from the OFT is a serious threat to Colovision. Almost half its sales are made on credit terms, and finance agreements account for a significant proportion of profits. The removal of credit licences would push the group into loss and threaten the future of the business.

However, it is believed Colovision should be able to show that it has taken steps to improve its credit systems. Six of the 13 most recent customer complaints were from one shop, which is now under new management.

Colovision pioneered a "management enterprise scheme", under which shop managers invest a sum of capital into a branch in return for a proportion of profits. The scheme is designed to motivate managers.

## 'No apology' in Daiwa scandal

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

On Wednesday, Japan's Minister of Finance, Masayoshi Takemura, got on the telephone with his American counterpart, US Treasury Secretary, Robert Rubin, to discuss the Daiwa scandal. That we know. But when it comes to what was actually said there are two rather distinct versions: a Tokyo one and a Washington one.

The Washington Script: Mr Takemura may not have grovelled, but on the issue of why six weeks were allowed to pass from the moment his ministry first learned of Daiwa's \$1.1 billion bond trading loss until the same information was given to the US authorities, he was allegedly deeply contrite.

Mr Takemura "acknowledged the ministry's failure to inform the US authorities promptly" that a single trader at Daiwa's New York branch, Yoshihide Iguchi, had stolen more than a \$1bn to cover up losses racked up over 11 years and deceived American regulators, a US Treasury reported. "In Washington reporters that sounded much like a formal apology. Moreover, Mr Takemura, they were told, had almost like a child asking for forgiveness, vowed that his ministry would mend its ways. "He promised it would not happen again", Mr Rubin's press office stated.

The Tokyo script: "Mr Takemura did not apologise to Mr Rubin," retorted Eisuke Sakakibara, a spokesman for the

Japanese Finance Ministry in a press conference in Tokyo on Thursday. Instead, he said, the minister had simply "acknowledged that there was a partial failure of communication."

Indeed, said Mr Sakakibara, for its part the Japanese Ministry still does not believe it has anything to apologise for. "I don't think there was anything improper in what we have done," The Tokyo press corps was furthermore informed that there had been "no mistakes". The ministry had first admitted last Monday that it got wind of the loss on 8 September, when Daiwa Bank approached a senior ministry official, Yoshiyama Nishimura. Mr Nishimura apparently told the Bank to investigate further and get back to him when it had

confirmation. It did so five weeks later and it was another week before the US was told.

Mr Nishimura suggested that cultural differences were partly to blame for the dispute. Japanese officials tend to bestow trust in bankers and like to get all the details of an affair before going public. The Americans believe in pouncing on a fire at the first sign of smoke.

Cultural differences may also have played a role in the different interpretations of the call. More likely, it was more a case of each side massaging the news for their respective audiences. Whether there was really some Japanese scraping and bowing or just non-committal acknowledgement is something only for Messrs Takemura and Rubin to know.

## Rhino crashes into Electronic Boutique after £6m loss

TOM STEVENSON  
Deputy City Editor

Rhino Group, the struggling video game retailer, launched its second rights issue of the year yesterday in a cash-raising exercise that could see its largest shareholder gain majority control.

The Electronics Boutique Inc (EBI), already a 25 per cent shareholder in Rhino, could see its shareholding rise to more than 50 per cent thanks to a commitment to underwrite the company's five-for-six cash call.

Rhino's shares closed 15p lower yesterday at 11p, compared to the 5p at which the rights are pitched. The effective takeover of Rhino has been

sanctioned by the takeover panel, which has said a full bid will not be required even if the US company's stake rises above 29.9 per cent. EBI plans to use Rhino as a launching pad for its European expansion plans.

Both companies operate in the same business, selling video games, PC software and related products. Unlike Rhino, however, EBI has prospered, growing fast since it was founded in 1977 and now generating sales of \$295m from its 413 stores in the US and Canada.

Rhino, by contrast, has suffered from a slump in the British market last year as children held back from buying games as they anticipated the launch of new products.

The shares crashed from a high of 65p just before Christmas 1993 to a low of 7p earlier this year as big companies such as Sony slashed prices and retailers such as Our Price and Virgin discounted to match.

The rights issue is part of a new strategic plan which will see Rhinon change the name of its Future Zone shops to Electronics Boutique. It will also change its year end to January from December.

Yesterday's cash-call announcement accompanied half year figures showing a pre-tax loss of £6.68m up from £1.57m last time. Turnover in the six months rose slightly from £17.4m to £18m. No dividend is proposed.

## Echoes of Guildford return to haunt appeal by the Guinness Four

Allegations of conspiracy feature in a City fight next week to overturn fraud convictions, writes Jeremy Warner

Conspiracy in high places, confessions extracted under duress, the withholding of possibly vital evidence by prosecuting authorities - anyone would think this was the Guildford Four case. This is also, however, what the four convicted Guinness defendants - Ernest Saunders, Gerald Ronson, Tony Parnes and Jack Lyons - claim happened to them.

On Monday, the Court of Appeal begins hearing aspects of these allegations - that defendants were unjustly deprived of their right of silence and that the Serious Fraud Office withheld evidence in its desperation to secure convictions. Lawyers rate their chances of a success as middling to high.

The Appeal Court hearing is only part of determined efforts by all four Guinness defendants to have their convictions quashed. Saunders, the former Guinness chairman, is also fighting to clear his name in Europe, claiming use of Department of Trade and Industry interviews as evidence

deprived him of a fair trial. Already he has achieved a considerable breakthrough in having his case referred to the European Court of Human Rights. A scheduled hearing in May was delayed until next year to allow the Appeal Court proceedings to take place first.

Two of the defendants, Saunders and Lyons, dispute that they were ever a part of the complex fraud which enabled Guinness to gain control of the Distillers liquor company in the mid-1980s, but this is not the basis of the appeal. The other two, Parnes and Ronson, admit that they participated but claim there was no dishonest intent.



Appealing case: The Guinness Four convicted of fraud - (from left) Ernest Saunders, Gerald Ronson, Tony Parnes and Jack Lyons

as a consequence a fair trial. Furthermore, he alleges that police were deliberately kept out of the Guinness affair for a number of months to allow the DTI a free hand in using its powers of compulsion to obtain self-incriminating statements. This was a conspiracy that went to the highest possible levels in government, according to Mr Saunders. To secure high-profile fraud convictions regardless, he insists, of normally accepted human rights. Ironically, the prosecution case

against Saunders was not based on these transcripts, but on the evidence of Olivier Roux, Guinness's finance director, and senior auditor, Howard Hughes. However, the transcripts were used extensively to discredit Saunders in cross-examination. Furthermore, the case against Parnes and Ronson was almost exclusively based on these interviews, which amounted to all but name to "confessions".

The other aspect of the appeal centres on evidence that was in the possession of the SFO at the time of the trial but was kept from defendants. What it showed was that a number of Guinness-style share support operations were conducted in the mid-1980s, lending some credence to defence claims that the Guinness indemnities were not unique. According to Parnes, such practices were a "grey area", few believed they might be illegal.

More damning still, the SFO also had in its possession the private findings of a City disciplinary tribunal, which concluded that such operations were perfectly proper. The Director General of the City Takeover Panel, Tim Barker, was a party to these findings. This, too, was kept from the defence and the judge.

Whether the opinion of a private City disciplinary body would materially have influenced the outcome is anyone's guess. Lord Spens, who stood trial over Guinness but was not convicted, says he has not the slightest doubt that had this evidence been available to Saunders and the others, they would have been acquitted.

One of the problems with the "hidden" evidence, however, is that nearly all the other cited cases of indemnified support involved people who were also part of the Guinness affair. To the extent that such practices were common, therefore, they may only have been so among a relatively small group of practitioners, many of whom ended up being prosecuted over Guinness.

The SFO has always maintained that there was no deliberate attempt to withhold evidence, which in any case it regarded as being irrelevant. The decision not to release it was taken on the advice of counsel. Furthermore, more onerous rules on disclosure that might have required the release of such documentation were not introduced until some years after the Guinness trial. Shortly before the trial, lawyers for Parnes received written confirmation from the SFO that all unused material had been disclosed.

Failure to defend the convictions would be a serious setback for the SFO. Though the SFO's record in prosecuting fraud is not as poor as often portrayed, it does have a bad record on complex securities fraud. The Guinness Four are among the very few high-profile convictions.



## business

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM SILVERSON

## Odds favour long-term growth stocks

The stock market's gyrations this week are guaranteed to confuse. No one appears to know where the market is headed and pundits' views are disproved daily, a reminder that forecasting is rarely anything but a mug's game.

Political worries, conflicting economic statistics, weak consumer demand and a raft of profits downgrades seem at odds with the Footsie nudging its all-time high. What appears to be keeping it at these levels is a combination of feverish bid rumours and strong institutional cashflows.

For most investors, judging the next move of the market as a whole is of academic interest only. Of more practical use is judging correctly which areas of the market are likely to benefit most at any given point in the economic cycle. That is the key to investment strategy.

BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays, believes we are at a watershed in the cycle, the end of the recovery phase which followed recession and the beginning of a period that will favour long-term

growth stocks at the expense of cyclical recovery plays.

The firm argues that the recent spate of profit downgrades which accompanied often disappointing interim results announcements is actually only a pause in growth. The next upward push will be driven by easing input price pressures next year, rising margins (which are still below the last peak) and the benefit of cost-reduction programmes since the recession.

Consumer stocks look less attractive than industrial companies. As a result of low inflation, the ability to improve prices will also be less of a factor and the best-placed companies over the next stage will be those that invested heavily to cut costs and become more efficient.

Other likely features of the next stage in the cycle are expected to be some broadening of the range of price/earnings ratios, which is narrower currently than for 30 years. That will also favour long-term growth stocks as earnings growth potential is more highly valued than simple recovery from recession.

The final beneficiaries of the second part of the cycle could also be smaller companies, which performed so well in the latter part of the 1980s. Almost by definition they offer greater growth prospects than larger companies and currently they suffer from low valuations as a class.

## Gloomy picture at Colorvision

The horizontal hold is well and truly on the blink at Colorvision, the television and video retailer. It's already struggling to cope with cut-throat competition in the electrical retail market and fragile consumer demand that shows few signs of strengthening.

Yesterday's announcement that the OFT is considering revoking the company's consumer credit licences merely added to the uncertainty surrounding a stock that has been a terrible performer since soon after floating in 1987.

The shares rode on the back of the late 1980s retail boom to hit 260p in June 1988 but have been on the slide since. Yesterday's 15 per cent fall to 40p takes the shares close to their all-time low of 24p.

The OFT warning is a matter of life and death for Colorvision. Credit finance accounts for almost half of group sales and a significant chunk of profits. Removing the finance income stream would turn the group into a loss-maker. Even if the licences are renewed the OFT is likely to insist that Colorvision upgrades its finance systems, which will increase costs and shave already wafer-thin margins. The negative publicity will also affect customer confidence.

The market is not exactly moving in Colorvision's favour either. Though sales of electrical goods have drifted out of town, nearly all Colorvision's 86 outlets are based on the high street where it must do battle with the larger and more powerful Dixons. Colorvision only has two out-of-town superstores and a bandful of concessions in branch-

es of Courts, the furniture group.

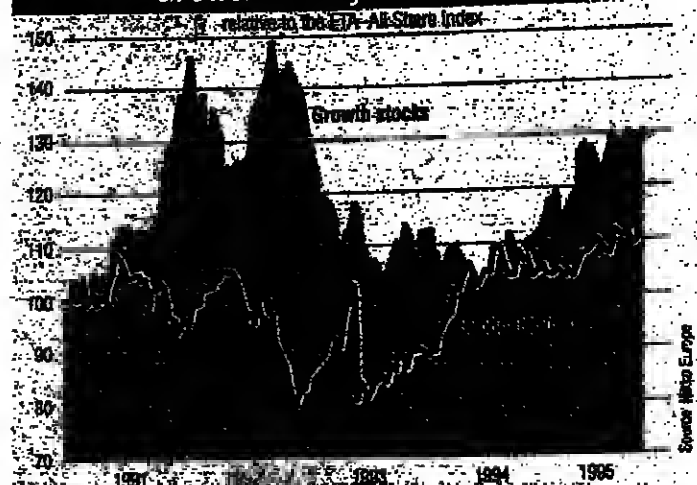
Though Rumbelows and most electricity companies have beat a hasty retreat from electrical retailing, little capacity is being removed from the market. Store groups are simply changing ownership.

Colorvision's broker Beeson Gregory is forecasting full-year profits of £1.2m for the current year, which puts the share on a forward rating of 10. Even that cheap rating does not compensate for the considerable risks. Avoid.

## Americans move on Rhino

Hindsight is a wonderful thing in investment but Rhino, the computer and video games retailer, was never going to be anything but a pretty volatile stock. Launched in September 1992 on the back of a surge of interest in screen-based games, the company's shares rocketed over the following 15 months.

## Growth and cyclical stocks



Maintaining that rise, however, was always dependent on the fad continuing. It didn't.

Since Christmas 1993 it has been downhill all the way, with the shares tumbling from a peak of 65p to just 11p yesterday, 3p above the price at which the 25 per cent shareholder Electronics Boutique Inc (EBI), an American company in the same business, is underwriting a rescue rights issue. The cash-call, on the basis of five new shares for six existing units, will raise about £9m.

EBI is planning to use Rhino as a launching pad for its planned European expansion and after the

rights issue could end up with more than 50 per cent of the shares. It has received special dispensation from the takeover panel not to have to bid for the company if its stake increases over 29.9 per cent. The rights issue, the second strategy which will in the way for a new strategy which will include rebranding Rhino's Future Zone shops as Electronics Boutiques by Christmas, guaranteeing lower prices than any competitor and using EBI's systems to judge consumer trends better.

The fundamentals look no more attractive than they did and the shares are best left to EBI.

## Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

## Is Major in a fix over mortgages?

Peels of laughter have been echoing around certain building society corridors. The leaders believe that John Major could still be locked into a fixed rate mortgage at around 9.25 per cent, costing him hundreds of pounds a month. Some are even suggesting that the Prime Minister's alleged dilemma might offer the perfect advertising opportunity. "If it's good enough for him, it's good enough for the public," guffawed one.

Mr Major was accused of fixing his mortgage by Bryan Gould at the 1992 Labour Party Conference - shortly before the sterling crisis and

the 15 per cent emergency rates announced by Norman Lamont. "So much for his confidence in his economic policies," Mr Gould told the delegates.

Quite who sold the Prime Minister the deal is not known. But some point accusingly to Mr Major's resounding endorsement of the Skipton Building Society during Prime Minister's question time in the summer. Mr Major, defending the withdrawal of state support for unemployed home-owners, lauded the society's unemployment package.

"We can't possibly comment," said Number 10.



Fixed up: the Prime Minister could be locked into a very costly 9.25% home loan rate. Photograph: PA

A bid for Schroders from National Westminster Bank might well drive Philip Angar to drink. NatWest's former equities and capital markets man has only recently left for Schroders in order to develop its securities side. Unfortunately, he remains hamstrung while the merchant bank agonises over its strategic review of the business, which is not expected to be completed before Christmas - unless, of course, it is cut short by a bid from NatWest.

If you happen to be suffering from a chronic bout of indigestion, or any other duodenal dilemma, you could do worse than pop along to the Singer & Friedlander investor show at London's Barbican Centre next Thursday.

It features displays from 45 smaller companies, with a combined capitalisation of £1bn. Some quoted, some not, they will all be hoping to catch the eye of over 500 institutions and analysts. Some cannot possibly fail.

Cortec International, a £110m pharmaceuticals company, will be offering visitors on-the-spot tests for ulcerous conditions. "It is a rapid test for helicobacter pylori, one of the main causes of stomach ulcers," explains John Breckon, the show's organiser. "It is not physically painful. But if a fund manager thinks he is hale and hearty it could ruin his day."

One demonstration will not be going ahead though. Toad, a hi-tech car security company, was to have triggered its new alarm which

explodes smoke inside a car when a thief gets in. Deeming it to be a fire hazard, Barbican fire marshals have insisted on a less incandescent display.

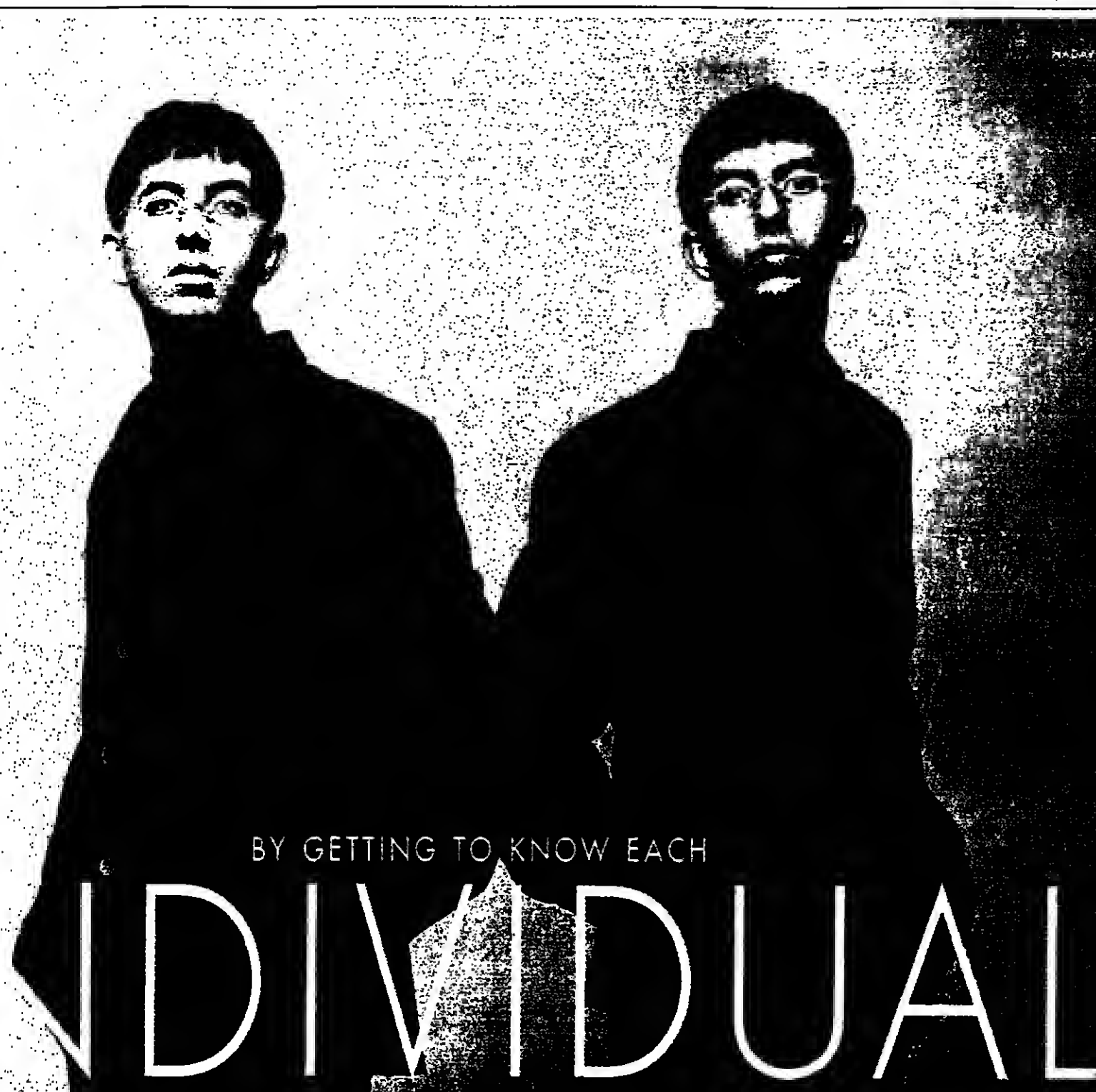
The real reason for the merger of Lloyds Bank and the TSB can be revealed at last. The combined bank will now comfortably outvote Standard Chartered on the steering committee of banks trying to recover squillions from the financially challenged leisure group, Brent Walker.

George Walker's old empire has been in the intensive care unit for years, kept alive only by a steady cash infusion from its lenders. A massive £1.6bn refinancing package left Standard Chartered, TSB, Lloyds and Credit Suisse with huge exposures, which they are desperately hoping to reduce when the William Hill subsidiary is finally floated.

We may just have witnessed a critical shift of power.

## COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Midland (Q)	0.21m (0.21m)	0.06m (0.05m)	0.30p (0.30p)	nil (nil)
Cadbury (Q)	12.7m (10.4m)	2.38m (1.57m)	0.07p (0.05p)	nil (nil)
Shire Pharmaceuticals (Q)	13.0m (14.4m)	-0.40m (-0.88m)	-0.87p (-1.15p)	nil (-)
(Q) - Quarterly (FY) - Fiscal (I) - Interim				



BY GETTING TO KNOW EACH

INDIVIDUAL

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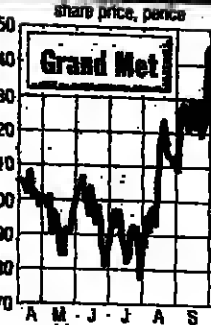
# market report/shares

## Blue-chip bid rumours send prices sharply higher

### DATA BANK

FT-SE 100  
3568.0 +44.2  
FT-SE 250  
3945.3 +8.9  
FT-SE 350  
1776.0 +18.0  
SEAQ VOLUME  
683.2m shares,  
31,033 bargains  
Gilt Index  
92.99 +0.39

### SHARE SPOTLIGHT



The speculative mill continued to work at full pelt yesterday, and dealing rooms were awash with a rumour that a huge bid for an FT-SE 100 stock would be made on Monday morning. The list of potential blue chip targets is long and includes Grand Metropolitan, BAT Industries, Cadbury Schweppes, Thorn EMI, Schroders and Royal Bank of Scotland.

Whether the rumour is true or not, market-makers were taking no chances and pushed share prices sharply higher. "I've never known anything like this," one seasoned trader said.

If all the bid rumours flying around the market were to turn into reality there would be a drastic reshaping at the top end of corporate UK. The fact that the already lengthy list of rumours grows by the day owes much to the fact that a great many deals are actually happening, and not just in the electricity sector.

Corporate financiers are already dreaming about their fat Christmas bonus cheques, and perhaps of more to come next year. But the problem with the current market is the confusion being created for investors who, judging by yesterday's trading volume figures, are reluctant to take chances.

At one stage of yesterday's heady proceedings the FT-SE 100 Index, which soared almost 50 points in the previous session, was sporting an advance just short of 61 points. While some of the froth was blown off in afternoon dealings, the index still closed 44.2 points higher at 3,568.0 - just shy of the all-time high of 3,570.8.

The surge, though, was not supported by buying activity, either from private investors or big institutions. Barely more than 600 million shares had changed hands by the final bell. And by the time brokers had made their final tally of the



### MARKET REPORT

JOHN SHEPHERD

day's trading, the figure had only risen to 683 million.

Grand Metropolitan was again the focus of much attention. The price climbed 13p to 454p, and more than 14 million shares were traded.

The shares are enjoying one of their strongest runs for some time, with the drive upwards being fuelled by speculation only. Most of the speculation homes in on a break-up bid being made by Klobberg Kravis Roberts, the American leveraged buyout specialists, or Grand Met selling its IDV drinks business to American Brands.

There was another suggestion that IDV might even be sold to its arch-rival Allied

Domecq, ahead 9p to 525p. One analyst believed, however, that the mark-up in Allied's shares owed more to a separate rumour that Michael Jackman, chairman, would retire next year and be succeeded by Sir Christopher Hogg, who became non-executive deputy chairman last year.

Demand for shares in Royal Bank of Scotland was heavy in very late dealings, and the price closed 20p higher at 522p, with more than 4.6 million traded. National Westminster Bank, up 18p to 639p, and Abbey National, 2p firmer at 572p, are rumoured as potential suitors.

NatWest is also said to be at

the front of the charge to buy Garmore, up 3p to another year's high of 292p. BAT Industries, also tipped as a possible buyer of Garmore and itself the subject of a break-up rumour, advanced 9p to 555p.

Still in financials, Schroders soared by a full pound at one time as its name was re-entered on the speculative bid list. Volume trading in the bank, which is 40 per cent family owned, was tiny at less than 263,000. The name of NatWest even featured in this particular strand of gossip.

Lloyds Abbey Life, however, fell 5p to 471p with talk of a line of 5 million shares being on offer. Legal & General put on a late spurt to finish 12p better at 640p.

Thames EMU shot up 54p to £15.06 amid the revival of talk that the company's own break-up plans would be pre-empted by a full-blown bid from Viacom or Disney. But once again,

the price rise took place in a trading vacuum, with only slightly more than 1 million going through the books.

Trading in Cadbury Schweppes was, however, reasonably heavy at almost 6 million. The shares, which started the week at 497p, firmed a further 1.5p to 547p with the rumour of a bid from Unilever, down 8p to £12.64, refusing to die down.

A raft of buy recommendations and changes of stance by analysts lifted several stocks. Fortis rose 5p to 249p as NatWest, a long-time bear, changed from reduce to hold.

Analysts at UBS appended the buy tag to several retailers including Kingfisher, 4p better at 511p. Argos, up 5p to 491p, and Dixons, 2p better at 386p.

The session's casualties included Colverson, off 7p to 40p as the OFT warned it might revoke its credit licences.

### TAKING STOCK

There was further gossip of possible takeovers in the USM bidder BCE Holdings, which has been transformed from a distributor of snooker and pool tables into a profitable computer games company. More than 1.3 million shares were dealt, and the price rose 0.75p to 19.5p. A similar number of shares were traded on Thursday.

Sketchley, trading at a year's high of 143p, is extending its range of shareholder perks. As from next month shareholder discounts will be widened to include 10 per cent off photo-processing at the recently acquired Supasnap, 10 per cent off all retail items at Sketchley and Supasnap and 25 per cent off the normal list prices for Sketchley dry cleaning bills. The price of qualification is high, however. Investors must own at least 1,000 shares.

### BANKS, MERCHANT

Share	Price	Change
Barclays Bank	410.00	+10.00
Bank of Scotland	454.00	+13.00
Bank of Ireland	380.00	+5.00
Bank of London	320.00	+2.00
Bank of Montreal	280.00	+1.00
Bank of New York	250.00	+1.00
Bank of Paris	220.00	+1.00
Bank of Spain	200.00	+1.00
Bank of Tokyo	180.00	+1.00
Bank of West	160.00	+1.00
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### BANKS, RETAIL

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### BREWERIES

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### BUILDING MATERIALS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### CHEMICALS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### DISTRIBUTORS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### ELECTRICITY

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### ENGINEERING

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### ENGINEERING VEHICLES

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### GAS DISTRIBUTION

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### HEALTH CARE

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### INVESTMENT COMPANIES

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	80.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	60.00	+1.00
Bank of Russia	40.00	+1.00
Bank of South Africa	20.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	10.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	5.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	3.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	2.00	+1.00
Bank of the Netherlands	1.00	+1.00
Bank of the Philippines	0.50	+1.00
Bank of the United Kingdom	0.25	+1.00

### LEISURE & HOTELS

Share	Price	Change
Bank of America	140.00	+1.00
Bank of China	120.00	+1.00
Bank of India	100.00	+1.00
Bank of Japan	110.00	+1.00
Bank of Korea	130.00	+1.00
Bank of London	125.00	+1.00
Bank of Mexico	115.00	+1.00
Bank of New York	135.00	+1.00
Bank of Paris	120.00	+1.00
Bank of Spain	110.00	+1.00
Bank of Sweden	125.00	+1.00
Bank of Switzerland	130.00	+1.00
Bank of Taiwan	115.00	+1.00
Bank of Thailand	120.00	+1.00
Bank of Tokyo	135.00	+1.00
Bank of Union	110.00	+1.00
Bank of Vietnam	125.00	+1.00
Bank of West	130.00	+1.00
Bank of World	115.00	+1.00
Bank of Asia	120.00	+1.00
Bank of Europe	135.00	+1.00
Bank of Middle East	110.00	+1.00
Bank of North America	125.00	+1.00
Bank of Oceania	130.00	+1.00
Bank of South America	115.00	+1.00
Bank of Southeast Asia	120.00	+1.00
Bank of Central Asia	135.00	+1.00
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# Why the

## World Cup m



# RUGBY LEAGUE CENTENARY WORLD CUP

## sport

### Fraternity rules in the friendly heartland

**Greg Wood** enjoys the spirit of true sportsmanship pervading the tournament

When the kick went through the posts to tie the game with 30 seconds left, it was almost too much for one spectator. He was left wide-eyed, trembling with excitement, shaking his head in disbelief. "Great," he kept saying. "It's just bloody great." No one who was there will forget the day that the Rugby League Centenary World Cup came to Humberston.

Football and cricket are just as capable as rugby league of reducing grown men to quivering delight, but the excitement at The Boulevard in Hull on Tuesday night was that the emotion had nothing to do with patriotism or self-interest. Papua New Guinea against Tonga on a warm evening in Hull would have a certain novelty value whatever the sport, but it was more than simple curiosity which persuaded 5,121 people, almost twice the average gate for Hull FC's home matches, through the turnstiles. Followers of rugby league, it seems, care about the game, not the match.

This fact was clearly lost on those who were claiming, only a week ago, that the World Cup had been undersold, that no one would watch unless England were playing Australia. At The Boulevard, they did more than just watch. There was applause for every run, a roar for each broken tackle, and a gasp and a wince for every one which stopped its target in its tracks.

After the first half, Tonga led 20-0, and allegiance inevitably shifted to their opponents. "It was amazing," Max Tiri, Papua New Guinea's vice-captain, said. "We could feel that they were right behind us as we started to pull back." When the hooter sounded at 28-28, season-ticket holders of 30 years standing could not remember seeing a better match.

Out on the terraces, one voice had been shouting for PNG from the kick-off. It belonged to the owner of a local jeans shop, for whom the World Cup had brought a welcome upturn in sales. "Half the team came in and they bought about 10 pairs each," he said. "I've never seen so many rock-hard calves in my life. They wanted some funny sizes too, like a 34 waist and a 38 leg, but we managed to sort them all out. They were great, really friendly, and they made sure we got tickets for the match."

Tickets were harder to come by in Wigan 24 hours later, when a full house of 26,000 crammed into Central Park to see England play Fiji, and the kick-off was delayed to pack them all in. "I paid a tout for three seats and



Dancing for joy: Fijian (above) prelude the South Pacific Islanders' confrontation with South Africa while (right) the Kiwi forward Steve Kearney consoles his former team-mate and now Tonga captain, Duane Mann. Two red-blazered dignitaries from Tonga (left) experience the warmth of Keighley



Photographs: Simon Wilkinson

he gave me one seat and two standing," one fan complained in a rare lapse of the rugby league spirit. "I said I'd rip his head off if he didn't give me what I'd paid for," he added, as he and his two companions settled into their seats. "But what do you expect? They're all cockneys, up from London."

So, it was goodwill to all men, except cockneys. Oh, and Liverpoolians. "All scousers are sinners," a salvationist preached by the main gate. "Neville Southall may be able to save a goal, but he can't save his soul."

But these minor outbreaks of insularity went no further. When the announcer asked everyone to stand for the anthems, they did, just as they had at The Boulevard. A single cry of "England" during the Fijian anthem brought embarrassed hushing from every corner of the Popular stand.

It should not have been surprising, but it was. They say that the atmosphere at rugby league is how football used to be 30 or 40 years ago, with children arranged along the pitch-side wall, a raffle at half-time and the

bard men on the turf, not the terraces. When the game kicked off, the only thing missing in the fevered support for England was a pair of blinkers. The visitors were never in the match, crushed 46-0 by an exceptional England side, but at the end there were three cheers for Fiji, and all but a handful of the spectators stayed to applaud their lap of honour. It is difficult to imagine a similar scene after a football international at Wembley.

Things could change with the arrival of Rupert Murdoch and the Super League, but the

tycoon surely knows when to leave a successful formula alone. He will be delighted, too, by the injection of interest the World Cup should provide. It has, so far, been admirably organised. The wise decision to postpone domestic matches for the Cup's duration must have played a significant part in the arrival of 40,000 fans at Wembley for the opening match, while the tournament format, which goes a long way to guaranteeing an England-Australia final, should bring many more back to the stadium in two weeks' time.

The other teams will return home with less glory, but drenched in experience, not least the knowledge that the sun does sometimes shine in England. "Normally when our guys are over here it's starting to get a bit cold," Martin Adamson, general manager of the League in PNG, says. "This time they've been lucky, and it's been marvellous for them to experience the facilities here and to play at such a high level, and the public response has been terrific. Whenever a try is scored, British crowds clap the scorer and the

whole team as they go back into position. That's something that doesn't happen at home."

It will, you suspect, always happen here. The spirit of rugby league demands it, the same spirit which persuaded a player from Papua New Guinea to break away from the lap of honour at The Boulevard and seek out the man who had sold him some trousers. "That was typical. He just wanted to make sure we'd got the tickets," the shop owner said afterwards, and then he laughed. "Oh, and he says the jeans don't fit."

### Western Samoa make an impact

Western Samoa announced their arrival in the World Cup in a thunderous fashion in their opening match on Thursday in Cardiff. Their performance will have worried England, who must now be hoping to avoid the Pacific Islanders in the semi-finals next weekend.

Western Samoa's powerful exhibition at Ninian Park took them to a momentous 56-10 victory over France, which sent their opponents crashing out of the competition. The bookmakers William Hill immediately reduced the odds on the Samoans - previously billed as the dark horses of the tournament - winning the World Cup from 50-1 to 10-1. Wales, who play Western Samoa in Swansea tomorrow, are 16-1.

The Samoans, the last of the 10 teams to open their World Cup campaign, ran in 10 tries against the outclassed French, showing that anything their famous rugby union brethren can do, they can at least equal.

Hill by injuries and still trying to come to terms with centre Stephane Miller's disqualification from the tournament earlier in the day after failing a drug test, France had no answer to their explosive opponents.

Vila Matautia, of St Helens, dominated what few forward battles there were. He worked tirelessly in the loose and went over for two of the tries to earn the man-of-the-match award - which could so easily have gone to any one of his team-mates, however.

Halifax's John Schuster was in superb form with the boot and kicked eight goals, while Tony Tātupu was also always involved.

Tātupu put Samoa on level terms with a try after six minutes; the full-back Paki Tuimavave added a second and then an explosive burst from Wigan's formidable Va'aiga Tuigamala brought Samoa's third try and, with Schuster adding the points, a 20-4 lead.

Matautia crossed for the first of his brace and, from 26-4 ahead at half-time, the Samoans went from strength to strength. Tuigamala added his second try, Matautia followed suit, Tātupu showed that he could do just as well and the substitute, Apollo Perelini of St Helens, added another within two minutes of coming on.

Bryan Laumaitia made it nine tries to Samoa before France, who never gave up the unequal struggle, hit back through Didier Cabestany with a try that Featherstone's Freddie Banquet converted.

But Samoa had the last word in the dying seconds when Willie Swann went over beneath the posts for Schuster to convert once more.

### Why the best of friends will resume an old rivalry

One Welsh player can be excused a haunted look when he surveys the opposition at the Vetch Field tomorrow. For Scott Gibbs, the Halifax Centenary World Cup match against Western Samoa is not just a chance to qualify for the tournament's semi-finals, it is also a return to nightmare country.

It was in the Wales rugby union side that lost to the Samoans at Cardiff Arms Park in that code's World Cup in 1991, and he has never forgotten the experience.

Beaten by a side which, at the time, had little international pedigree, Wales faced mockery and vilification. What, they asked in the valleys, would have happened if they had played the whole of Samoa?

"We took a lot of criticism, because at the time Western Samoa had just come up and

had no real record in international," says Gibbs, now a successful convert at St Helens. "I got smashed on the jaw early on by Junior Paramore; they were a very physical side," he recalls. "We scored two late tries to get back into it but time ran out for us."

The result was widely regarded as an indication that time was running out for Welsh rugby as a whole and that decline had set in. According to Apollo Perelini, who played against Gibbs that day and who is now a team-mate at St Helens and a member of the Western Samoa rugby league squad, that perception was largely the result of ignorance.

"People just thought, 'Western Samoa? Where's that?' But if they had looked into it, they would have known that the whole team was playing rugby



to a good standard in New Zealand," he says. "But to them we were an unknown quantity."

Perelini, who joined Saints two months after Gibbs, stayed in the same hotel and was helped by him to settle in at the club, says that it is a very different situation this time. Far more is expected from the Western Samoa league side than of their union counterparts four years ago. "If we were to beat them, people would probably say it was expected," Perelini says.

When Scott Gibbs (left) and Apollo Perelini first faced up to each other in union, Wales suffered the unthinkable. Should Western Samoa be the victors tomorrow it would not be such a shock, says Dave Hadfield



There is an element of the unexpected about Samoa, but that is because they have never played together. Their side is full of players whose ability and reputation is established, however, and the Welsh team this time is forewarned.

"We know Samoan rugby has gone from strength to strength and that a lot of players in the league side play in New Zealand and Britain. We have a better idea what to expect," Gibbs says.

Those expectations include another fiercely physical encounter. "They hit very hard," he says. "They seem to be built genetically different from everyone else."

For Perelini, famously named after the American moon shot, Apollo 11, memories of 1991 in Cardiff are still fresh. "It was one of the finest victories I ever experienced in a blue shirt," he says. "Wales had always been right up there as a great rugby nation, so to beat them at Cardiff Arms

Park was a great achievement. This game in Swansea hasn't had the hype that the rugby union games get, but it will be a major event in its own right."

Perelini, a wing forward in union, has settled down at prop after the American moon shot, a sign, as he says, of the need for quicker players in the front row in the modern game. One of his greatest fans at St Helens is Gibbs. "Apollo is a lovely person, but he has a very professional attitude," he says. "He has adapted really well."

"I'm really enjoying it," says Perelini himself. "It's very hard for the first six months and then you start to get used to things."

Gibbs' own transition from union to league was one of the smoothest on record. His hard-running, hard-tackling style translated immediately into his new game, and he suffered few of the teething pains associated with converts crossing the codes.

His only setback was a badly dislocated elbow which disrupted the latter stages of last season and stopped him taking up a summer contract with Manly, the club coached by the Australian coach, Bob Fulton, who had been hugely impressed by him during last year's Kangaroo tour.

Restored to full health this season, Gibbs was always destined to take his place in the Welsh league side, although he

has not yet had the experience of playing for them at The Vetch.

"There will be a full house there on Sunday and the guys all tell me that there is far more atmosphere here than at Ninian Park," he says.

"It has been acknowledged from the start that this was the toughest group, so this match should be something special. Mind you, it's very, very rare you see a dull rugby league match."

And, as he could but does not add, very rare that you play in one that gives you a chance to rewrite some personal rugby history. Scott Gibbs, after all, does not want to go down in the unforgotten annals of Welsh sport as the man who lost to Western Samoa - those breakers of dreams - in both codes.

World Cup update									
Group One					Group Three				
England	30	Australia	15		Wales	30	France	10	
Australia	20	S Africa	5		France	30	W Samoa	56	
Fiji	20	S Africa	5						
England	46	Fiji	5						
P W D L F A Pts					P W D L F A Pts				
England	2	2	0	0	56	18	4		
Australia	2	1	0	1	30	28	2		
Fiji	2	1	1	0	52	22	2		
S Africa	2	0	0	2	12	135	0		
Group Two					Group Four				
Papua NG	20	Tonga	20						
New Zealand	25	Tonga	24						
P W D L F A Pts					P W D L F A Pts				
New Zealand	1	0	0	2	24	2			
Papua NG	1	0	1	0	28	28	1		
Tonga	2	0	1	1	52	53	1		

### The stage is ready for Offiah

Martin Offiah opens his Halifax Centenary World Cup campaign today in a match that promises what he likes best - lots of tries, writes Dave Hadfield.

Offiah, who has scored in every match for Wigan this season, has been out of action so far in the tournament with thigh and calf strains. Unleashing him on the hapless South Africans at Headingley tonight gives him not only the chance to confirm his fitness, but also to remind himself repeatedly of the mechanics of try-scoring.

"We wanted Martin to have a game before the semi-final stage and he has proved his fitness," Phil Larder, the England coach, said. "Clearly it is good for us to be able to call up a player of his undoubted class."

Offiah's recall means that John Bentley switches to the right wing, thus giving Jason Robinson

a rest. Further reshuffling in the backs brings Barrie-Jon Mather into the centres and gives Paul Cook his first start for England.

Cook, the 19-year-old Leeds player, will be given responsibility for goal-kicking on his home ground. If he hits anything like the kicking form he has shown for his club, he could achieve the unique feat of rewriting the international kicking records in his first full match at this level.

The half-back pairing of Shaun Edwards and Daryl Powell need to reassert their seniority after excellent displays by Bobbie Goulding and Tony Smith - both on the bench today - against Fiji in midweek.

In the forwards, Mick Cassidy will be used at hooker and, with Denis Betts and Andrew Farrell rested, Simon Haughton and Chris Joynt team up in the second row.

It is a line-up not only good enough to win, and thus ensure playing the winners of tomorrow's Wales-Western Samoa match in the semi-finals, but to win by even more than the 86-6 by which Australia put South Africa to the sword on Tuesday.

The Rhinos have turned out to be an expensive mistake in this tournament. They are, as some in that country tried to point out, nowhere near ready for this level of competition and would have been much happier in the Emerging Nations event.

Nor, given South Africans' record in these matters, should they have been allowed to come to Britain without being drug-tested first, as were all the other countries. That would have avoided the embarrassment of a steroid user, Pierre Grobbelaar, being sent home this week. That

can hardly help their chances of escaping this misconceived expedition without further embarrassment on the pitch.

For today's match, their coach, Tony Fisher, has made a couple of drastic positional changes, in an effort to make themselves less vulnerable. Workington's Mark Johnson, their one player with serious league experience, is moved from wing to stand-off and second-row Tim Fourie is drafted into centre. Sadly for the credibility of this little corner of what has otherwise been a roaring success of a first week of the World Cup, it is unlikely to make much difference.

ENGLAND (vs South Africa, Headingley, tonight): Cook (Leeds), Bentley (Halifax), Philkey (Leeds), Mather (Wigan), Offiah (Wigan), Powell (Leeds), Edwards (Wigan), Harrison (Halifax), Cassidy (Wigan), Ford (Auckland Warriors), Nanton (Wigan), Joynt (St Helens), Charles (Sydney City Roosters), Substitutes: Goulding (St Helens), Smith (Castleford), Broadbent (Sheff), Sampson (Castleford).

### Quinnell called up to face Samoans

Scott Quinnell will make his Welsh debut tomorrow in the most important match since the national team was re-formed, writes Dave Hadfield.

The Wigan forward has recovered from an ankle injury and takes his place in the second row against Western Samoa at Swansea, a match Wales must win to set up a semi-final against England.

Halifax's Mark Perrett drops out, while Neil Cowie, who missed Wales' opening match against France as his wife was having a baby, is on the bench at the expense of Mark Jones.

Samoa's coach, Graham Lowe, is delaying his selection but will not make many changes for a game that is expected to

attract a 16,000 full house at Vetch Field.

Fiji, who play Australia this afternoon, are also holding on for three players rated as doubtful. The full-back, Waisea Sovatabua, has flu. The loose forward, Samuela Marayawa and the goal-kicking stand-off, Noa Nayacakalou, and have knee injuries.

The New Zealand Rugby League has apologised to the World Cup organisers after their hooker, Syd Eru, tested positive for pseudoephedrine. WALES (Group Three vs Western Samoa, Vetch Field, Swansea, tomorrow): Harris (Warrington), Davies (Wigan), Jones (St Helens), Substitutes: Cronin (Leeds), Sullivan (St Helens), Davies (Warrington), Croft, Ellis (North Queens), and Croft (Sheff), Edwards (Wigan), Young (Glasgow), Moriarty (Halifax), Quinnell (Wigan), Byrne (Leeds), Substitutes: Cowie (Wigan), Cunningham (St Helens), Phillips (Warrington), Huxley (Wigan).











## sport



Steve Stone hits the heights on his England debut this week

Photograph: David Ashdown

# Stone happy to ride the roller-coaster

Glenn Moore talks to one of the few England successes in Oslo this week on his up and down career at Forest

Steve Stone could not stop smiling, and it was not because his airline dinner had arrived. It was in the early hours of Thursday morning, we were somewhere over the North Sea, and Stone was entering his fourth hour as a full England international.

The 24-year-old Nottingham Forest midfielder had played the last quarter of England's goalless draw with Norway on Wednesday night, and been one of the few players to emerge with credit. Not that he was making a fuss about it.

Having denied Stale Solbakken a shooting opportunity with his first touch, he almost induced an own goal from Henning Berg with his second, a right-wing cross. It was almost the closest England came to scoring but, afterwards, Stone could not even remember it without prompting.

However, he could remember when he knew he would win his first cap. "As we came out after half-time Terry Venables made a special point of saying to me: 'Make sure you get really warmed-up'. That is when I felt I would get on."

"I thought we kept the ball well in the first half, but we were not getting round them enough. I thought maybe I could get behind them. That is one of my strengths and that is what happened with that chance."

Stone had been told he was a substitute in the morning after Venables took the team on a walk around their leafy Oslo hotel. It was a rapid rise, considering this was only his first time in the squad.

"I was surprised at being called up," he said. "I had been playing well at home for Forest but my away form had not been so clever - although that applies to the whole team."

"I knew some of the England scouts had been watching us, and I had played well in some of the games, so I knew I was in with a chance. When I did get in I looked around and thought: 'Well, there's been some injuries, that is why I am in'."

"I was a bit nervous coming down. I thought: 'Nobody knows each other, what will it be like?'. Then I got there and everybody knew each other from times gone by, and playing against each other."

They made me feel welcome from the start.

"I talked to some of the Newcastle lads, being from there myself, Robert Lee and John Beresford. It was also a big help having Stuart Pearce there. He's massive at Forest and he is also very big at international level. They room us in separate rooms, but he just came and stayed in my room."

Like Pearce, who came late to professional football, Stone appreciates his fortune. Although he has always been in football, having been signed by Forest as a junior, his career was clearly finished before it began.

"I broke my right leg three times," he recalled, attempting to flex it in the narrow confines of an aircraft seat. "I must have played for about a year between 17 and 20. The first two I thought would be alright but the third time there were complications. It took me more than a year to get back and I could see some of the staff at Forest looking at me and thinking: 'He's not going to make it'."

"I did wonder if I would. There was much sticking to the bone, but a series of cortisone injections solved the problem."

"I have never looked back. It is a roller-coaster at the minute. Everything has gone so well since, then you keep thinking something is going to come crashing down. It makes you appreciate it more. I have seen the other side of it, when you think you are not going to make it as a footballer. Then you make it to the highest level, it gives you a great buzz."

Having regained his fitness, Stone now had to gain a first-team place. It was Brian Clough's final season as manager and Forest were heading for relegation.

"He did not put me in at first, I was too young. It can be a bad thing putting a young lad in a relegation situation because he might not recover. He put me in for the last 12 games. By then we were doomed. But it gave me a good insight into the Premiership and made me want to get back there."

"He was a character. He would come in and everyone would stand back. You kept quiet; you did not want to say anything out of turn as he would chew your head off. He was very good, though."

Frank Clark took over and Stone won a regular place in central midfield but, when Lars Bohinen arrived, he was switched to the right wing.

"I was not playing well in the centre and the move was fair enough. I did not warrant a place inside. He probably saw I had a little bit of pace and he then persisted with me as I looked out of place for about four months. I am grateful for that. He has been a good manager, he has pushed me along and worked on me. Eventually I struck up a good partnership with Des Lytle, the right-back."

"I do not like being stuck too wide. I like being on the edge of the box and getting behind defences. If you stick me out wide you are losing a bit. My strengths are getting at people, making them make mistakes. Anybody can look good if you give them time. I try and get on them - it is a one-on-one situation with the left-back and I do not want to let them settle."

"My weaknesses? My final ball could be better, I am working on that. I need to pick people out better. And my finishing. I always used to score goals from centre-midfield, but as soon as I got in the first team I stopped scoring."

Crossing and shooting: fairly damning weaknesses for an attacking wide midfielder. At Forest there is a feeling that he is not yet an international player - but he could develop into one. He does get in goalkeeping positions, which is half the battle. So is self-awareness, Stone knows his weaknesses and is prepared to work on them.

Venables is confident in his ability to continue improving. "I have watched him for some time," he said. "He did well last season and started this season even better. He did very well when he came on. He looked very sharp. He has had a lot of injuries and he has earned his chance."

Today Forest take their unbeaten Premiership record to White Hart Lane, where they, and Stone, first came to prominence last season with a 4-1 win.

"Spurs have hit a bit of form but we have always done well down there: we play well against sides who let us play," Stone said. "Last year we played really well. They were just starting a bad run and in the second half we gave them a real going over, hitting them on the break in true Forest style."

Forest surprised many by finishing fourth last season, and have done relatively well this year, despite drawing too often. But with Stan Collymore and then Bohinen moving on, there is a feeling that the club structure - which prevents an individual taking control - means they will never be able to match the financial power of the big-city clubs and those supported by the likes of Jack Walker.

"We miss Stan. Any team would. He is a phenomenal player. But Jason Lee is doing well, he does the things he's good at - gets the ball, lays it off, gets in the box. Bryan Roy is playing a Nicky Barnby role and he is complementing him well. We can hold anybody on our day, our defence is very good, but we have to be more consistent."

And if Forest do not win things? Middlesbrough have been linked with Stone, both he and his girlfriend - they have two children - are from the North-east and Stone's Geordie accent is still strong.

"That has been going on for a while. There have been a few clubs mentioned. But I am happy at Forest. It is a good set-up, with a good manager, and the supporters like me. The grass is not always greener. A lot of people have left Forest to try and better themselves, but it does not always work out like that."

He has a point. Nigel Clough, Neil Webb, even Collymore - for the moment - have lost their England places after leaving Forest. The unassuming Stone insists: "I might not be in the next squad. There were a lot of injuries this time." It will be a surprise if he is not.

## Team news

**Aston Villa v Chelsea**  
Townsend is serving a one-match suspension. Stanton will take his place in Villa's midfield with McIlraith returning to defence. Milosovic (groin strain) is doubtful. Johnson stands by. Chelsea's Speckman starts a three-match suspension. Rocco makes his debut for the first time this season. Myers and Steve are fit, but Sinclair (ankle) is out.

**Blackburn v Southampton**  
Bohinen is expected to make debut for champions but McIlraith may have to wait. Goalkeeper Flowers (knee) has recovered. Saints are hoping that Wright can shrug off a dead leg. Henney or Hughes stand by to deputise.

**Bolton v Everton**  
McIlraith spearheads Bolton's attack, but fellow striker Pate (knee) (knee) is not expected to come into consideration for first-team duty. Yet, Amokachi and Kanchelskis return as Everton seeks to end their dismal run.

**Leeds v Arsenal**  
Goalkeeper Lukic makes his 400th appearance for Leeds while Dorogi, Pemberton and Whelan have all recovered from injury. Skipper McAllister hopes to be in the squad despite picking up an ankle knock playing for Scotland. Arsenal are underdog.

**Liverpool v Coventry**  
Rush has recovered from back injury but cannot expect a quick return following Fowler's fine form. Assistant manager Stachan is in Coventry squad which is depleted by the absence through injury of Dublin, Burrows and Harris. Left-back Hall faces a late fitness test. Borrows stands by.

**Man Utd v Manchester City**  
Keane is still awaiting advice on his injured groin but may feature in United's try for a fifth successive derby win. Cantona (knee) faces a late test. City's Philin deputises for the suspended Brightwell in defence.

**QPR v Newcastle**  
Rangers fans are still waiting for first appearance of £1m striker Hareley, but Sinclair returns after a one-match suspension. Ferdinand will be the centre of attention for Newcastle against the old club. Beardsley (knee), Glavin (thigh) and Hareley (knee) are all fit.

**Tottenham v Nottingham Forest**  
Spurs have ruled out Armstrong so far unless his debut alongside Shearer. For Forest Roy has recovered from knee injury and is set to take over from Silen. Bert Williams has struggled off a groin injury but Campbell and Phillips are still out.

**Wimbledon v West Ham**  
Long-term Wimbledon casualties Blackwell and McAllister are approaching full fitness. Hammers will be without injured full-back Breach, Danish defender Rieper is favourite to rule over although Brown and Rowland are also in contention.

**TOMORROW**  
Sheffield Wed v Middlesbrough  
Inconsistent Wednesday are without suspended Hirst, but Daynes returns after injury. Boro manager Watson has ruled out a comeback for himself and has drafted Stamp into his squad. Pot took picked up a back injury in training and is doubtful.

## Back to the bread and butter

Mark Burton on the big issues of the weekend's Premiership programme

After an international interlude that some might have found irritating, it is back to the bread-and-butter business of competing for points. For any side on a good run, there will be the worry that the 12-day pause in Premiership play could have broken the spell. For the out of sorts, there will have been frustration at being unable to go straight back on to the pitch to sort things out.

But if defeat or disappointment at national level irritated the fans, that is nothing in comparison to Howard Wilkinson's annoyance as the Leeds United manager ponders whether to risk Gary McAllister against Arsenal at Elland Road this afternoon. The Scot returned from international duty in Sweden with an ankle injury, but has now decided he is fit enough to play. Wilkinson's problem is that he will want McAllister for Tuesday's UEFA Cup match against PSV Eindhoven, and the slightest knock today might rule him out of that.

This afternoon, when Arsenal

visit Elland Road, Leeds will have a foretaste of dealing with a Dutch threat in a match that could be decided by strikers who were not whisked away to join the whirl of European Championship action. Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp was not needed by the Netherlands for their trip to Malta and Tony Yeboah, the Leeds goal machine, was excused on geographical grounds, although if Israel can be in Europe for football purposes, then why not Ghana?

Neither was Eric Cantona called to the French flag, nor Uwe Rösler required by Germany in Wales. However, they should both be involved in settling a little local difficulty in the Manchester derby. The element of doubt concerns Cantona. Apparently, he is improving. Not his talents, if that were possible, nor perhaps his temper, but his fitness after injuring his leg in a reserve game last weekend.

Irreplaceable the irascible one may be, but Alex Ferguson is awash with alternatives in choosing the United team to trot out at Old Trafford. If only his managerial counterpart at Maine Road had problems of that magnitude. Alan Ball refuses to panic even though, despite Rösler's goals, his City side have managed only one draw and seven defeats in the league this season. Today is as good a time as any to launch a recovery, as the theory goes that anything can happen in a derby. In practice, though, predictability tends to prevail. To save Ball the trouble of saying so, though, it is too early to start dreading the drop.

Predictability - sorry, continuity - rules at international level, too, which is presumably why Les Ferdinand did not even make the England bench in Oslo despite his glut of goals helping to make Newcastle

United the benchmark for success this season. Yet another theory suggests he cannot fail to score against his former club, Queens' Park Rangers, at Loftus Road this afternoon.

The man who retained his ooo-scoring striking role for England, Alan Shearer, comes face to face with one who cannot find a way into Terry Venables' squad at all when Matt Le Tissier plays for Southampton at Blackburn this afternoon. Teddy Sheringham tries to add to his 11 domestic goals so far this season when Tottenham take on a Nottingham Forest side short of Lars Bohinen, one of England's Norwegian opponents.

Blackburn may field Bohinen and Billy McKinlay, who both completed their moves to Ewood Park yesterday, while Everton have two of their foreign imports, Daniel Amokachi and Andrei Kanchelskis, back from injury for their trip to Bolton. Now there is a non-international interlude, that Everton will be glad to see...

## Petrescu moves to Chelsea for £2.3m

RUPERT METCALF

Dan Petrescu got his wish yesterday: a move from Sheffield Wednesday to Chelsea. The 27-year-old Romanian international full-back, brought to Hillsborough from Genoa by Trevor Francis for £1.3m last summer, will cost his new club £2.3m - subject to a new work permit being granted.

Petrescu upset David Pleat, who replaced Francis in the club's search for a new full-back, when he reportedly said that he wanted to play alongside Rund Gulit at Stamford Bridge. "It created an unhealthy situation," Pleat said yesterday. "His agent was looking to change a contract that was only 15 or 16 months old."

Blackburn Rovers completed two deals yesterday that will boost their midfield resources: Scotland's Billy McKinlay arrived from Dundee United for £1.75m while Norway's Lars Bohinen finalised his cut-price £750,000

move from Nottingham Forest. One midfielder is leaving Ewood Park: Lee Makel has joined Huddersfield for £300,000.

Bolton have agreed a £1m fee with Partizan Belgrade for the 23-year-old Yugoslav international, Sasa Curcic, and have taken another midfielder man, Wayne Burnett, from Plymouth on loan with a view to a £100,000 move. Bolton have also sold the striker Owen Coyle to Dundee United for £400,000.

The Swiss Football Federation has agreed to let their coach, Roy Hodgson, join Internazionale - but only if he stays on as part-time coach of the Swiss national team, who are almost certain to qualify for the European Championship finals next summer.

The English-born coach has told an Italian newspaper that he will "not have a preferential relationship" with Paul Ince, Inter's England midfielder, "just because he is the same nationality as me."

## McCoist may have to wait

Scottish football

Four international players - Paul McStay, Stuart McCall, Ally McCoist and Scott Booth - are available to return to Scottish League action today.

All four missed Scotland's friendly with Sweden in Stockholm on Wednesday, but are fit enough to be named in squads by Celtic, Rangers and Aberdeen respectively.

Although McCall should play, Rangers may not risk McCoist for their visit to Partick Thistle, with a Championship League trip to Juventus to come on Wednesday. McCoist suffered a thigh strain 10 days ago but has made a quick recovery.

"I don't want to bring him back too quickly if there is a chance of the same injury happening again," said the Ibrox manager, Walter Smith, who will still be without five top men tomorrow: Paul Gascoigne, Brian Laudrup, Charlie Miller, Ian Ferguson and Oleg Salenko are all injured.

Celtic entertain Hibernian with McStay back after a groin problem. Phil O'Donnell will play in the reserves as he seeks to prove his fitness for Thursday's Cup-Winners' Cup tie at Paris St-Germain. Tosh McKinlay also has a chance of making it for that game but will not feature today. Celtic will not comment on speculation linking them with the Liverpool and Wales striker, Ian Rush.

The Aberdeen striker Booth, the top scorer in the Premier League, is fit to keep his place for the visit to Fir Park to face Motherwell.

Heart of Midlothian are at home to Raith Rovers, who may have their minds on Tuesday's UEFA Cup meeting with Bayern Munich. Jim Jeffries, the Hearts manager, will give Tynes a debut to Neil Poynton, the former Everton full-back, and Steve Fulton after their recent arrivals in Edinburgh. David Hagen, who went to Falkirk when Fulton moved to Hearts, makes his debut against Kilmarnock at Breckville Park.

## Quite suddenly, one sunny afternoon at Gigg Lane, our world was turned upside down

FAN'S EYE VIEW  
No 115  
Southend United  
STEVEN E. HEATH

Roots Hall was once a sanctuary where a man could be alone. Many a dank Friday evening have I spent standing beneath one of many drips in its rain-lashed West Stand communing with the dozen or so like-minded misanthropes who regularly foregathered there in the hope of catching a glimpse of Greta Garbo whilst being mildly diverted by a collection of muddled oafs indulging in what, at that time, passed for Fourth Division association football in this outpost of empire on the Essex coast.

We were simple folk, largely inured to the team yo-yoing from Fourth Division to Third and back again. A successful season was one where we finished higher than Colchester United. While occasionally enjoying the talents of players like

Billy Best or Richard Cadette, more often than not the long suffering diarchs had to content themselves with watching Paul Roberts' weekly addition for Billy Smart's circus. One could always enjoy the dyslexic announcer grappling with the English language and battling with the elements and the feedback over the 15 watt PA system that had once provided the sounds in the chairman's Ford Zephyr.

In the frequent playing hiatuses, home fans could play "Spot the Rochdale/Barnsley supporter" or anticipate the excitement of watching the dozing herring gull plummet headfirst off the crossbar during a goalmouth scramble. The really adventurous among us would even take odds on which of the neighbouring flats' windows "Big Roy" were also, unwittingly,

McDonough would smash when shooting for goal. But, quite suddenly, one sunny afternoon at Gigg Lane, our world was turned upside down. That day Ian Benjamin scored a goal that not only won a game for the Blues but also propelled them into the unknown, heady atmosphere of the Second Division. Much rejoicing ensued. Goodbye Darlington, Hartlepool and Colchester! Hello Charlton, Luton and Grimsby!

However, like the cheering crowds of August 1914, we were also, unwittingly,

referee's whistle had died away. To gain access it was now necessary to negotiate queues the length of which had only previously been seen snaking from the outside urinals. And once inside all the "regular spots" had been obliterated by plastic seating seemingly designed to house malnourished dwarves.

Most disturbing of all we saw, faced, taciturn old hands, few, we happy few who had once thrilled to the 10-1 drubbing of Aldershot in the Leyland Def Cup, had to share our stand with strangers who would ask questions like "Who are the team in blue?"

Gooe, too, the blue and white knitted scarves and black-shattering rattles to be replaced by borders of portly genis, working towards their first embolisms, squeezed into

what were once the preserve of fairly young and fit footballers. The last time I had seen the seams of a Southend shirt under similar stress, it had had a No 10 on the back and contained Keith Mercer...

It is not even as if our higher status has shielded us from the peridy of managers and players deserting us for the main chance. Consequently the (albeit remote) prospect of reaching the Premier League appalls me.

Surely the true romance of football is to be found in the camaraderie and bopelose optimism of the lower divisions. Is not belonging to a small coterie on an away trip to Hartlepool more edifying than sporting a Macclesfield United shirt on a Saturday afternoon's shopping trip to Lakeside?





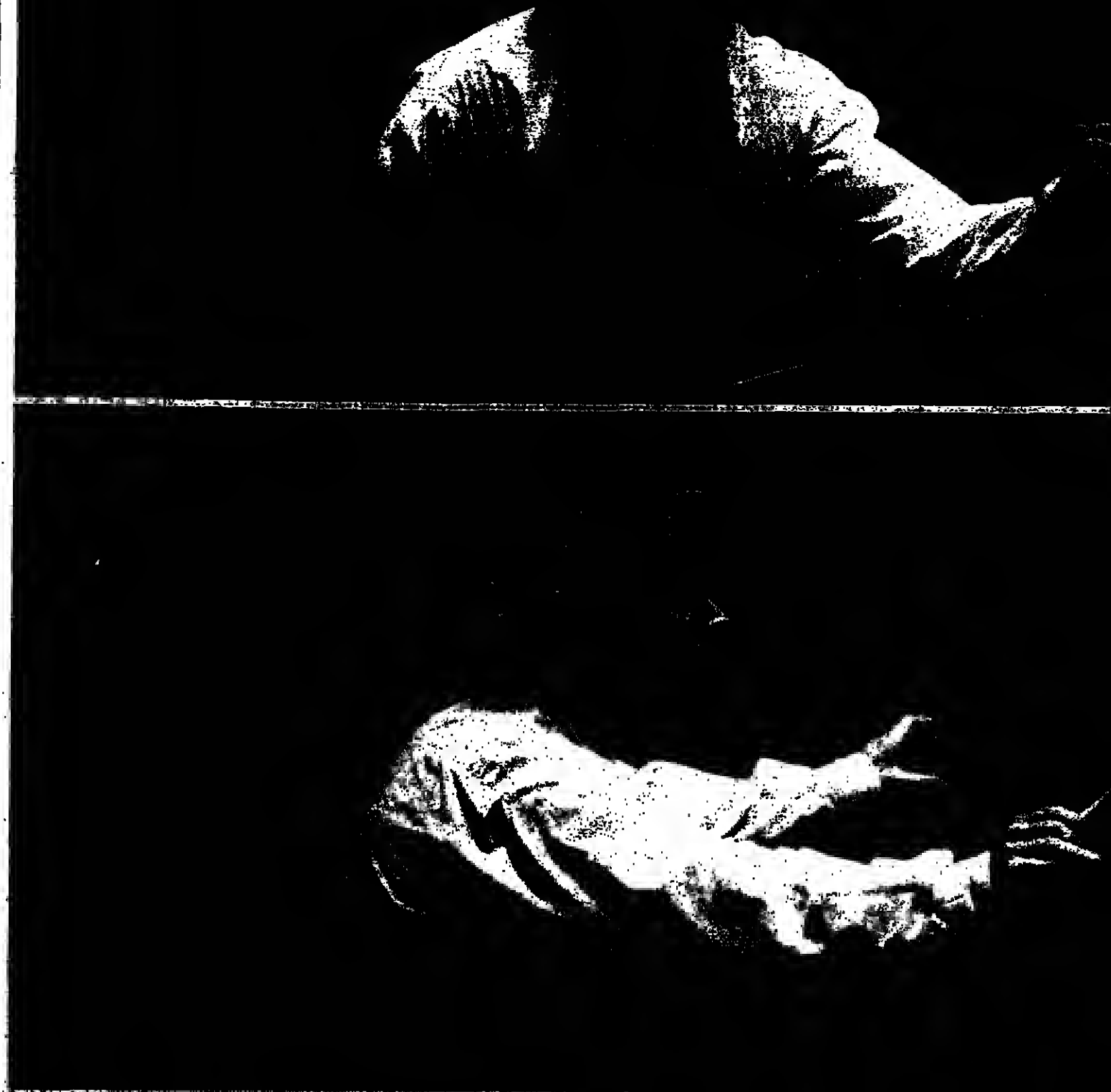






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Pictures: Steve Hill/News Team

## INSIDE STORIES

**3** 'Increasingly,' says Peter Moore, 'I'm thinking of what's their names? What's their names? I mean that name yesterday? At some point I'll forget I ever worked with Peter Cook. I suppose, and Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller.'

'There was a framed copy of the nation's favourite picture on the wall of our breakfast room and its picture, mainly hectoring, would catch my weary gaze in the morning. It's a terrible picture.'

**15** 'A lot of people think it would be nice to open a little shop. It looks easy. They do all the costings for going into business, but they ignore things like rent escalation. A lot of people have lost a lot of money.'



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# Arts and Books

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## Rat art



Stephen Daldry's revival of *The Rat in the Skull* at the Duke of York's is gut-wrenching  
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Dickie Fantastic France pays tribute to Michael York  
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Follow my leader  
Roy Jenkins in the shadow of his biographical subject: Gladstone  
page 9

I've been reading *Pride and Prejudice* recently, a novelisation of Andrew Davies' classic television series of the same name. The paperback is adorned with a full colour photograph of Colin Firth as Mr Darcy and Jennifer Ehle as Lizzy, so I think there's little doubt that it is a shameless attempt to cash in on the success of the original, now drawing over 9m viewers every week. And while I don't want to sound puritanical about it, I have to say I'm a little disappointed with the liberties that have been taken with Mr Davies' creation.

There are those, of course, who defend such translations of a work of art into another medium. They believe that

'Jane Austen (can we really believe that name? I imagine some corpulent copywriter with a tax-bill to pay) makes a very poor fist of Mrs Bennett'

such processes bring the work to a new audience. And though they concede that most purchasers of the book will simply wolf it down unthinkingly and pass on, they argue that a few might be introduced to the rarefied intellectual pleasures of the classic serial. If a coarsening of the original intention takes place, then that is a reasonable price to pay.

There is something to be said for this argument, it's true, but I'm not convinced it can survive the indignities of the actual text. As you turn the pages it becomes clear that there is no thought of fidelity in the mind of the hack who has produced this catchpenny spin-off. On page after page, glaring errors and omissions



can be found, suggesting that the writer has no feel for the merits of Mr Davies' work, no respect for the genre conventions of the television serial. Take the characterisation first of all: Jane Austen (can we really believe that name? I imagine some corpulent copywriter with a tax-bill to pay) makes a very poor fist of Mrs Bennett. Instead of Davies' immortal creation — a character that bears comparison to some great television predecessors — Bet Lynch in *Coronation Street*, Hyacinth Bucket in *Keeping Up Appearances* — we are offered a strangely depleted version. Not un-

amusing, to be fair but you can't quite shake off the feeling that this is a woman you might meet in the street, that she might live next door to you.

Austen, I'm afraid, has no real flair for grotesque caricature. At least with Mrs Bennett you feel she has tried. But Darcy is subject to truly perverse alterations. He is several times described as smiling in the book when everyone knows that Darcy's unchanging facial expression is that of a man who has just been obliged to shoot his own dog — that fixed scowl is what gives the early parts of the story its distinctive flavour. Austen's

thing to live on, as well as the plain") is no longer made to his face, as it is on screen, but in an aside to an aunt — which makes Lizzy appear almost decorous, rather than the feisty coquette we know and love.

Worst of all, and most mysteriously, there is hardly a word about the clothes, the interiors, the meals. Where Davies gives you a cornucopia of period detail, rich in colour and texture, Austen supplies only the most cursory descriptions. Such things are harder in prose, it's true, but Austen's indolence in this respect is unforgivable. All she seems to care about is what people do and what they feel, not what they look like and what they wear.

## Both New York and London's premier ballet companies struggled in the wake of their founders' deaths. Why has ours come off worse?

By John Percival



Above: New York City Ballet in Paris; Sir Frederick Ashton (top left), George Balanchine (left). Photos: Marie-Noëlle Robert, Zoë Dominie, Martha Swope

One way of seeing almost every substantial ballet company in the world would have been, over the years, to attend the Paris International Dance Festival each autumn. This month's season by New York City Ballet offered a special interest for British visitors: to compare how well this company and the Royal Ballet are coping with the loss of their founder choreographers, George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton, who both died during the 1980s.

Some people in New York will tell you that NYCB is in a bad way. Nonsense. The five performances I have just seen in Paris showed a variety of programming and an exhilaration of performance that any British company should envy. And comparing the way these Americans danced with memories of former years showed me falling off.

My yardstick among the Balanchine works shown in Paris would be three that have been constantly in NYCB's programmes since their earliest days, and consequently have been danced by several generations of principals: the Tchaikovsky *Serenade* lacked nothing of its full romantic emotion, or the bounce of its lighter moments; the Bizet *Symphony in C*, the perfect classic showpiece for a large cast, is still given with a brilliant pace and delicacy; and two different casts in the Hindemith *Four Temperaments* both brought out the expressive eloquence of Balanchine's neo-classic invention.

In fact, the company is probably stronger than ever in male dancers: an enviable team of leading men includes Albert Evans's smooth pliancy, the stylish ease of Robert LaFosse, Philip Neal's romantic presence, the forcefully explosive Jock Soto, the swift lightness of Ethan Stiefel, dazzling Damian Woetzel and the immensely powerful Igor Zelen-sky. True, there are not quite so many principal women in their prime as a few years back, but a company that has Darc Kistler and Kyra Nichols outstanding among at least half a dozen others of high quality has nothing to apologise for (real ballerinas are an endangered species everywhere today).

Maybe a lighter work offers a harder test. *Walpurgisnacht Ballet* (music from the opera *Faust*) reveals Balanchine in playful mood, making the women let their hair down both literally and metaphorically. With Darc Kistler giving a smilingly ironic touch to the ballerina role, it became a far more delicious confection than I had remembered.

But Peter Martins, whom Balanchine chose and, through example and advice, trained as his successor, insists that to be a curator of Balanchine's works is not his job. Luckily there are others to take care of that. Within the company is a team of ballet staff who came up through the ranks. Besides, Barbara Horgan, Balanchine's former administrator, still occupies the office next to Martins' at

New York State Theatre in her new capacity as head of the Balanchine Foundation. This licenses and supervises productions of his works by other companies worldwide, appoints and trains people to stage them, and has begun an ambitious project to video his former dancers coaching their old roles.

Meanwhile, at the Royal Ballet most of Ashton's works moulder away, unstaged and increasingly less well remembered. There is no Ashton Foundation to look after them and encourage new productions; three of the six friends to whose care he left some of the most popular ones are already themselves dead. The Royal Ballet thinks it can keep the heritage alive without special arrangements. Judging by some recent productions, that is over-optimistic.

Another big difference is the way the two companies work. At Covent Garden, weeks of preparation go into one programme which is given a few performances, then put aside. The staff there would certainly be shocked to hear Peter Martins' remark that NYCB has more than a hundred ballets in its active repertoire — by which he means that if you asked for any one of them, the dancers could have it on stage within the week.

Theoretically, the Royal Ballet system should make for higher standards, but it does not always work out that way. With any live performance, things vary from one night to another; even the most polished

production goes wrong occasionally. With NYCB, equally there are some "off nights" — the *Concerto Barocco* which I saw in Paris looked flaccid, for instance — but no more than anywhere else.

How to account for this? Partly, the way the load is spread: NYCB lets nobody lurk unnoticed in the corps de ballet but gives solos to dancers at all levels. Partly, too, the way the dancers are trained at the company's own School of American Ballet; it is no accident that the three strongest ballet companies in the world today (in New York, Paris and St Petersburg) have what are widely thought to be the three best ballet schools.

The major factor accounting for NYCB's quality under pressure, however, must be their work ethic: you cope because you have to. And the nature of the ballets helps, with the emphasis all on choreography, on drive. There are almost no narratives, few decors and usually very simple costumes. Music and dance carry the whole interest; the dancers know they cannot hide.

One of Peter Martins' own ballets given in Paris makes the point clear. Contrast his *Fearful Symmetries*, to the score by John Adams, with Ashley Page's production at Covent Garden using the same music. Whether you prefer one choreography or the other is beside the point: both are inventive and capable. But Page for the Royal Ballet uses elaborate settings and costumes. Martins sets

his cast moving with tremendous energy on an empty stage.

Energy is not the only consideration. Paris wanted to pay special homage to Balanchine's long-term colleague Jerome Robbins, so two complete programmes of his works were brought, among them the hour-long, immensely slow-moving Noh-inspired *Watermill*, which shows a man (the French star Jean Guizerix as guest) looking back on the seasons of his life. Some boos mingled with the cheers for that, which at least showed that people really cared.

Robbins' *Goldberg Variations* is even longer, covering Bach's full 75 minutes: to put that on the same bill as *Watermill* really strains the audience's attention, but the amazing flow of Robbins' choreographic invention rewards every minute. His latest ballet, created only last year, again the Bach piano music, shows the choreographer (now 76) in amazingly youthful mood matching both the dazzling simplicity and the intricacy of a dozen of the 2 & 3 Part Inventions.

Both this and *Goldberg*, incidentally, featured several of the many up-and-coming new dancers, notable among them the dark-haired, heart-faced Jennifer Ringer and the fresh-looking, fair-haired Christopher Wheeldon, who transferred to NYCB from the Royal Ballet. What a difference he must have found!

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INTERVIEW

# Diminuendo

Turning 60, the death of Peter Cook, some naff movies and messy relationships have had a curious shrinking effect upon Dudley Moore. Perhaps his new appetite for the classics will help increase his stature.

By Giles Smith

One lunchtime last week, Dudley Moore went to the headquarters of EMI Records in Hammersmith, London, to perform, for the entertainment of the staff there, some excerpts from his latest record. This is not, as one might assume, a recording of largely improvised conversational rudeness, in the manner of the Derek and Clive albums, and not is it another piano-led jazz album, in the vein of the dozen such records that Moore released in the Sixties and Seventies, as a passionately indulged distraction from his comedy work. Rather, Moore's new album is a version of Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, Op 16. Or, in other words, *Dud Goes Legit*.

This is a fairly bracing step outwards for Dudley Moore, though it was foreshadowed in 1990 by his work with Georg Solti on the didactic television series *Orchestra!* Moore refers to the record as "a first record, my Opus One", as if this were a new beginning altogether.

That said, the recording does include some additional material. Being *entirely* serious has never been Dudley Moore's particular forte. So, directly after the *allegro moderato*, with Moore alone at the piano, we pitch into a set of seven parodies, most of them dating back to *Beyond the Fringe*. There's the one that imagines the "Colonel Bogey Theme" from *Bridge Over the River Kwai* as if it were composed by Beethoven; there's a minute-long Schubertian nightmare entitled "Die Flabbergast"; and there's "Fantaisie-impromptu in C sharp minor or Olde English Music Hall Songs", which Moore threw together in a hurry one year as a present for Michael Caine on his birthday. ("I thought," Moore said, "what does Michael Caine like? I dunno. Maybe he likes music hall songs.") These skits sit at the end of this otherwise duly straight-faced recording like a musical equivalent of the smile which, when Dudley Moore appears before an audience, he is forever trying without success to suppress.

To judge by the audience that turned out at EMI, Moore amounts to a fairly unique kind of cross-over artist. The place thrummed in anticipation of his arrival – not just with the people from the classical division, but also the people from pop and from sales and marketing and promotions, hanging over a balcony and standing on the stairs, all craning their necks to get a look at the diminutive figure of Moore, in a dark silk shirt, jeans and a sports jacket, astride a piano stool at one end of the tall-ceilinged lobby area. Moore loves an audience. He is a small man and a giant ham. He gave the EMI staff a particularly energetic portion of the Grieg, his hands flying high off the keys. Then he started in on the parodies. Some low, brooding minor chords were heard, suggesting the immensity of something vast and terrible. "Daisy, Daisy," Moore sang. "Give me your answer, do."

His last movie role was in the doubtful farce *Blame it on the Bellboy* in 1992, and he hasn't really made a hit film since *Arthur* in 1980. Yet, in Britain, Moore's name still carries with it a kind of Hollywood buzz and he is still apt to arouse in us a not undilutedly honourable curiosity. We all know that Moore schucked off his homeland in 1973 and went to live where the sun and the money is; we're all still keen to see how it's working out.

After the EMI performance, at an honorary lunch held upstairs in the polished acreage of the EMI boardroom, the audience was smaller and Moore seemed much quieter. (Here, over grilled salmon, pumpkin *risotto* and a *marinate* salad, Roger Lewis, the managing director of EMI Premier Label, talked to Moore about the possibility of recording some Bach, a notion that Moore seemed quietly warm towards, though there was a glass of red wine in his hand at the time.) After lunch, settling into an armchair for an interview, Moore seemed quieter still. It would, of course, be one of the major drawbacks about being Dudley Moore that people would expect you to be teary-eyed with mirth on a perpetual basis and to clinch every meeting with the "Goodbye" tune. But he seemed particularly under-charged.

He spoke slowly, drawing the words out, inserting long, reflective pauses into which some of his sentences disappeared, never to emerge. Occasionally, he would start an anecdote and let it dwindle into nothing, as if losing its thread. He talked for a while about versions of the Grieg he had listened to in preparation for recording his own, mentioning Barenboim and Ashkenazy, before pulling himself up with the sudden realisation that he was talking about Mozart, and not about Grieg at all. At 60, Dudley Moore seemed preoccupied, above all, with alarming failures in his short-term memory.

"For instance," he said. "I met someone and I couldn't believe that I'd had lunch with them the day before. I said, 'We had lunch?' She said, 'Yes – don't you remember? Lentil soup and smoked...' Moore grimaced and shook his head slowly.

"Maybe the memory does play tricks. Increasingly, I'm thinking, 'What was their name? I knew that name yesterday.' I think that's what happens. At some point, I'll forget that I ever worked with Peter Cook, I suppose, and Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller. I remember the death of Howard Cosell, a famous American sports commentator who wore the most horrendous toupee. I think he made a fairly wise remark – he said people fade away."

Moore brightened marginally at this point. "It reminds me of the old joke," he said. "At least, I think it's an old joke. 'What's Faye Dunaway doing now?' 'Oh, she's just Faye Dunaway.'"

Moore has always had a tendency towards melancholy, but it seems to have become increased in him by the death, earlier this year, of his former partner, Peter Cook. "I felt hollow," he said. "I did not know how to respond." When Moore learned that Cook had died, he called Cook's answerphone to hear his voice. Now, he says, he finds himself thinking a lot about ageing.

Moore's mother had rheumatoid arthritis when she was 50. Moore has found himself wincing in anticipation of its onset, though so far it has stayed away. "I do do physical exercise whatsoever but I'm going to have to at some point because things are starting to stiffen up." Moore then quoted a line from "some television programme". It went: "What should be soft is hard and what should be hard is soft." Moore laughed slowly. "I thought that was very funny," he said. "It's what happens to us."

We could be forgiven for imagining it would never happen to the perpetually boyish Dudley Moore. For much

of the Seventies and Eighties, Moore seemed to be permanently on honeymoon. He was married to the actress Suzy Kendall for four years, ending in 1972. Three years later, he married the actress Tuesday Weld. Their marriage lasted five years. His marriage to the model Brogan Lane in 1988 lasted only two years. His present marriage, to Nicole Rothschild, is a little over a year old and they have a three-month-old son, Nicholas, but stories of the relationship's instability are already in the papers. ("I'm not going to get into that," Moore said.) A month before the wedding, Moore was, amazingly, arrested on suspicion of "cohabitational abuse". He spent two hours in a Los Angeles police station and \$50,000 on bail. Evidently, he and Rothschild had argued while watching the Oscars ceremony on television. No charges were brought against him, and Rothschild later took the blame for the incident, claiming she had been "drunk as a skunk" at the time.

This all seemed impossibly removed from the calm Moore was said to have instilled in himself through expensive therapy. "I still stand by therapy," he said, "though I haven't done it for years. In my case, I was totally frozen for at least three years. I couldn't say a thing, couldn't come out with anything. Then I came out with everything."

Everything included a mother who had shown no affection for him. (The first kiss Moore reckons he can recall came from a nurse when he was seven.) And it included the years of Moore's childhood, which he spent in and out of hospitals, undergoing corrective surgery on his two clubbed feet. "I used to ask my mother and father, 'What happened when I was young?'" he said. "What happened?" And my mother used to fob me off."

Moore's voyage into therapy is often written about as something deeply Californian, produced as evidence of his hiving the L.A. package whole. But you can see why the Englishman in him might have been drawn to it. There were always striking contradictions about Moore that he was helpless in the face of. He was a working-class boy from Dagenham, but he successfully operated in traditionally middle-class areas – Oxford, broadcasting. He would have to be one of only a small handful of organ scholars from Magdalen College, Oxford, who managed to go on to become international sex symbols. (Jonathan Miller once referred to Moore's "pagan, almost Pan-like ability to attract women".) And his status as a sex symbol was itself bound around with contradictions – it had to do with his representing the cuddly opposite of what a sex symbol physically amounted to. He was the bloke who wins the girl with wit. He was mock-heroic beefcake.

"I liked group therapy," he says. "I thought that was very useful because you're interacting with human beings and not just talking to a therapist, which can be aggravating, annoying." It was in a group therapy session that Moore met the film director Blake Edwards. "I said to him, 'You're a director I admire, you did all those Peter Sellers films, and I just want to stop there because this is not meant to be an audition.'" But that's how it worked out. In 1979, Edwards put Moore in the "sex comedy" *10* opposite Bo Derek – Bo Derek and Clive, almost – and began Moore's somewhat truncated run as a cuddly Hollywood big-shot.

He has had to cope with the aftermath of that – the elegant and abrupt journey from "sex thimble" to cast-off, though he has never had to feel entirely frozen out. This week, back in Los Angeles, Moore will have spent three days shooting a car rental commercial. He is also scheduled to begin filming a new Barbra Streisand movie called *The Mirror Has Been Broken*. But clearly playing the piano occupies him now more than it ever has. He has a studio by the beach in Venice in Los Angeles, with "a Bosendorfer upstairs, a Steinway and a Yamaha downstairs." But the concentrated atmosphere of the place "scars the hell out of me", so he only puts his head in every now and again. Presently, he says, he plays mostly in the house he has rented in Venice where the piano is "conveniently adjacent to the kitchen. I like playing in that 'atmosphere of patience' which Schnabel talked about. It becomes something that you just do naturally." And physically, it's something he is fit for. A problem he had with a knuckle on his left hand, he said, seemed to disperse when he changed his diet and gave up eating dinners.

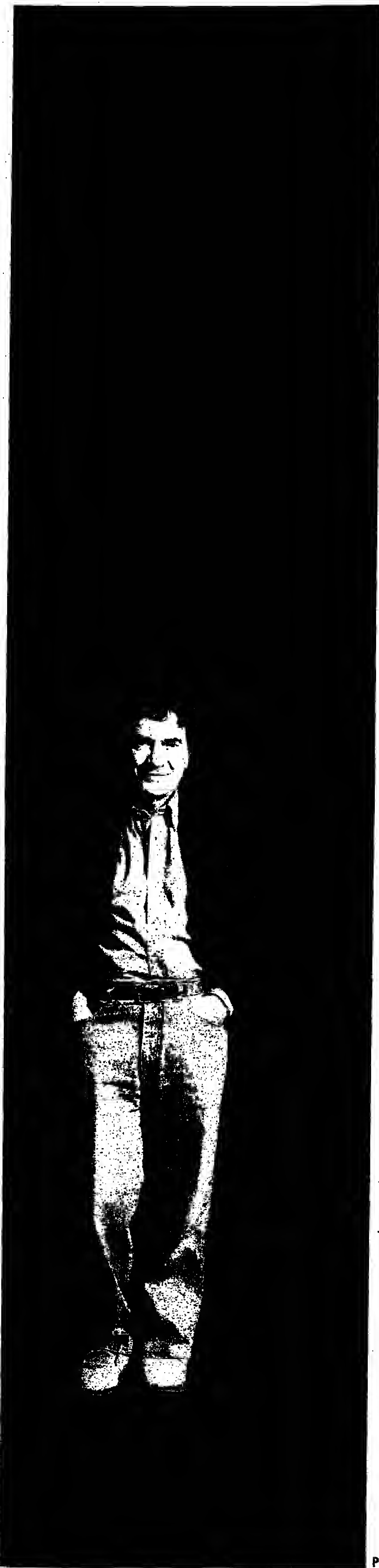
As he sits and plays, he is still prone to drift into jazz – "a chord and some jazz above it, just doodling". And the first programmable button on his car radio is a jazz station. "The car is the only place where I listen to music. There is no hi-fi in the house. I choose not to have one."

I asked him why he hadn't felt drawn to enter classical musical earlier. "It was the classical world's bitchiness," he said. "That's what put me off for so long. There is so much competition. It seemed be-smared with venom. That's why I like coming from behind as an actor; an actor that does music is of interest, it seems."

How seriously can we take a Dudley Moore performance of Grieg? It might not help that the last comedian to record Grieg's Piano Concerto was Eric Morecambe, under the baton of Andre Previn in one of the truly great Morecambe and Wise sketches. ("I am playing all the right notes," Morecambe insisted, "but not necessarily in the right order.") When the world knows you best for your ability to grate the high against the low and spark a laugh, it's always going to be tough attempting to stick solely to the high-ground. This is the additional burden Moore carries into a serious classical rendition; he has to convince you somehow that he is not about to hurt into soog.

"I wasn't haunted by the memory of Eric Morecambe," Moore said. "Maybe I should have been. But I gave a fairly serious performance of it – suitably grave. And I'm now troubled unduly by how it will be received. I have become fatalistic about responses to my music. I have made up my mind that I will be received and ridiculed in a certain way, so I don't read any newspaper. Unless the review is entirely in the nature of a genuflection, I don't like to read it."

The point is, I think there are some wonderful tunes in the Grieg. It's hard to ignore it. Schnabel once said, how can you like a concerto that goes 'der der da-da dum-flump' and so on. I don't have any hope or prospect of recording modern concertos, partly because I'm not that fond of them and partly because... I'm not that fond of them. It would seem daft to record a concerto that you didn't feel food of – a waste of time." And for the first and only time in our conversation, Moore dropped into character, fluttering his eyelids and intoning, preciously, "For who knows when the good Lord will take?"



Moore has always had a tendency towards melancholy, but it seems to have been increased in him by the death, earlier this year, of his former partner, Peter Cook. "I felt hollow," he said. "I did not know how to respond." When Moore learned that Cook had died, he called Cook's answerphone to hear his voice. Now, he says, he finds himself thinking a lot about ageing

Photograph by Herbie Knott



# What a nice man — what a very nice man

David Patterson has a mild obsession: to find anyone who will say something mean about the designer Paul Smith. Not a chance



Paul Smith: 'I am an okay designer, and an okay businessman'

Photo: Julian Broad

The Design Museum is packed tonight, and everyone is wearing a Paul Smith suit. True, this is the launch of the Paul Smith tribute exhibition, but one would assume that these people would be wearing Paul Smith suits whatever they were doing tonight (except, perhaps, for attending a Versace launch party).

They are Paul Smith people through and through — beautiful, rich, individual, British. A microphone has been set up in the corner, next to a framed poster for a recent Oxford Union season of events. Many guest speakers are listed on the poster — Max Clifford, Joseph Heller — but only two are circled in green ink. Paul Smith and Kermit the Frog. For all of this overwhelming pomp and glamour, Smith would like us to know, he is only a muppet (albeit, like Kermit, the chief muppet — you wouldn't get Fozzie Bear invited to speak at the Oxford Union).

Then Terence Conran and Jeremy Isaacs take the stage, and eulogise (as you'd expect). The eulogies, however, are ebullient enough to temper any cynicism. These are super eulogies. Jeremy Isaacs: "Probably the most extraordinary and remarkable man I have ever known."

Terence Conran: "A true Brit. A credit to this country. If there were more people alive like Paul Smith, Britain would surely be a greater place. Let's give him a resounding cheer!" Everybody cheers, heartily. Paul Smith blushes, and sticks up his thumbs.

Paul Smith is every profile writer's nightmare, for he seems genuinely to be the world's most liked man. His likeability, it seems, transcends analysis: it is ubiquitous and boundless. ("He knows everything about football. We talked for ages about George Best. Fantastic. One of the lads" — a journalist from *Loaded* magazine).

Although I certainly hadn't intended to dig up the dirt and rake

the muck, I have become rather ungraciously obsessed in finding someone who has anything in the least bit mean to say about him: nobody can, surely, be that impeccable. But it is to little avail. ("Thank God for Paul Smith" — the *Independent*, March 1994.)

And now that all the superlatives have been exhausted, the "Man Who Has, and Deserves, Everything" (*Sunday Times*) has been given something new — this elaborate and fine Design Museum exhibition, dedicated to the life and myth. Like the suits, Paul Smith is an uncomplicated — if slightly goofy — fellow designed to be painted in broad strokes, as the exhibition deftly does.

And these are they:

1. Down-to-earth Credit Trader father.  
2. Fell off his bicycle aged 17. Mouths to hospital. (An exact replica of the bicycle — hunkered wheel intact — begins the exhibition.)  
3. Started selling T-shirts from a big box in a Nottingham back alley. (He did, however, call the box-business "Vêtements". The exhibition is entitled *Smart from the Start*.)

4. Met Pauline, his partner of 29 years, who convinced him to branch out and move to London. (We can read Pauline's diary from the time: "Just came home. We are all very tired.")

5. Now owns 146 shops in Japan.  
6. Likes toy trains.  
7. Everyone likes him.

The quintessential salt of the earth, suggest these broad strokes, is awed by his own life and accomplishment. Indeed, one corner of the exhibition is dedicated to nice letters he's received from people like Bruce Weber, which would be perceived as vanity to most, but comes out as something akin to ingenious charm in Smith.

As does everything else. The accent, the demeanour, is parochial (if slightly effete) Nottingham through and through. It is as if he's in a permanent state of Not-Believe-

ing-His-Luckness. "I am an OK designer," he has said, "and an OK businessman."

This self-deprecation is not to be taken seriously, of course. He had a wonderfully simple idea, which he has executed beautifully: how to transform The Suit into a personal expression of subtly kooky, yet nicely wealthy, individuality.

Paul Smith suits go well with Filofaxes and boxer shorts (both popularised by Smith), but just as well with toy sculptures of spaghetti (which you can also purchase in his shops). Jack Nicholson, David Bowie, David Hockney — they are all Paul Smith men. I am reminded of the Jeff Daniels character in *Something Wild*.

"I am a rebel," he announces. "I just channel it in the mainstream."

For in interviews and important meetings, Smith has a tendency to suddenly announce, with a twinkle in his eye: "I'm bored."

After this, he produces a model train set, or bangs a squeaky toy hammer on the table, or — if he is working in his Covent Garden ex-hanana warehouse office — slides down the spiral staircase, while whooping with glee. He goofily sticks up his thumbs in approbation like an impeccably stylish Krokodil or Peter Stringfellow, or an autumnal Jean-Paul Gaultier.

But — in conversation, at least — he is a man for all seasons. When I wonder aloud to the journalist from *Loaded* whether Smith is the sort to guilefully manipulate his character to whatever company he's in — and, if so, what would that suggest about his disposition — he jumps hastily to the designer's defence.

"No. Honestly. He prefers to talk about George Best."

But then: "He's just the most charming, wonderful man I've ever met," says a rather lofty fashion buyer who wishes to remain nameless. "We spoke for hours about architecture. He's so knowledgeable. And serious, too."

"Did you know that he refused his

nomination for British Designer of the Year as a protest against the lack of government support for the industry?"

"Why," I ask, "do you want to be anonymous if you've only got nice things to say about him?"

"I just don't want to take the chance," she replies, softly. "Who knows? He might be angry."

This, it transpires, is doubtful. Paul Smith says he has never, ever lost his temper, even, it seems, aged 17. This was the age, of course, when he famously and painfully fell off his racing bicycle and did not become melancholy or enraged at an unjust world.

"I just realised that there's more to life than riding a bike," he said. But the temperance and eccentricity belong to a man who knows he is in charge. The spiral staircase he whoopingly slides down leads straight to his employees' offices, designed, it is said, so he can keep an eye on them. Interestingly, too, many journalists have complained that he will invariably terminate the interview at the appointed minute ("The second!" exclaims one. "The second hand went to 12, and he immediately stood up and shook my hand!"). And it is very easy, of course, to bang a squeaky hammer during a very important meeting if the people around the table all work for you.

But this is childish nit-picking. I never did find anyone with a gripe against Paul Smith. Maybe he really is — as *Loaded* has claimed — the Greatest Living Englishman. He certainly fulfils all the vital prerequisites — a liberal down-to-earth manner tinged with harmless humour; a suit that makes us look interesting and unique, but not too interesting or unique. And, lest we forget (as Paul Smith has reminded more than one journalist), Nottingham is situated in the very, very centre of England.

For further details about the exhibition, call the Design Museum, Strand Thames, London SE1 on 0171-403 7436.

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'Beethoven was always too much. He's not *slightly* anything, he's very everything . . . It takes its toll. Preparing this music, conducting it, playing it, you feel yourself stretched on some kind of psychological rack'

With five down and four to go, Edward Seckerson listens in as Sir Simon Rattle prepares to complete his first Beethoven symphony cycle

"With the help of assiduous labour you shall receive Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands." Count Waldstein to Ludwig van Beethoven, patron to protégé. No doubt his famous remark was well-intentioned, well-meaning, offered in a spirit of optimism and encouragement. What are patrons for, if not to patronise? But little did he know. Waldstein had heard the future, invested in it, but he could have had no conception of the return.

It was to be a further eight years before Beethoven went public with his First Symphony. And he wasn't about to receive anything from Haydn's hands. Take, yes; snatch, seize and transform; reinvent. The Second Symphony was perhaps the last point at which Haydn could make any real sense of where Beethoven's music was going. That's a Haydn symphony fit to burst. The Third, the "Eroica" – one of only a handful of works truly to change the course of musical history – was forged from the will to live in the face of a desire to die: music of spiritual necessity, defiant, intransigent, tragic and comic, human and divine, sublime and ridiculous, inevitable and ineffable. Revolutionary music for a revolutionary age. And ever after. "Es muss sein," said Beethoven: "It must be."

Sir Simon Rattle is presently contemplating the wider implications of those three little words. Sooner or later, they all do – the great and the good, the too good. This is one rite of passage that comes to them all: a first complete cycle of the Beethoven Symphonies. In Birmingham, in London, and – in the course of one daunting week in November – in Frankfurt, Rattle will reveal all – and more – of himself. He is weary, elated, anxious, more than a little awed. But ready.

Let's put it into perspective. Last summer, he and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra set down 53 pieces of contemporary music in seven days for a new Channel 4 TV series. But even that was as nothing, but nothing, he says, compared to the challenge, the responsibility, of Beethoven's Ninth. When the most celebrated, the most revered, the most played symphonies in musical literature beckon, conductors prepare to be judged and found wanting. You may have earned the right to try, and even fail, but nowhere are a conductor's shortcomings, a conductor's mistakes so audible as they are here. As Rattle himself says: "There is simply nowhere to hide."

"This music is merciless. Beethoven is the clearest mirror that we have. He tells you exactly where you are in every sense – musically, spiritually, rhythmically, in terms of the imagination. Look, even Goethe shied away from Beethoven's presence. He couldn't take it. It wasn't just that they were so different, that Beethoven was eccentric and Goethe the patrician – it was this stunning honesty and directness. It was inescapable, it made people very, very uncomfortable. Remember that the person closest to Beethoven – his nephew Carl – tried to commit suicide in an attempt to break free of his influence. I mean, when Beethoven's brother died, he basically kidnapped Carl. And Carl simply couldn't take it, this smothering, suffocating, overpowering presence."

"Beethoven was always too much. He's not *slightly* anything, he's very everything. The drama is very extreme; so is the humour. Suddenly, I'm grateful for all the Mahler I've conducted. It's these amazing contradictions – from suicidal to witty within a bar. But it takes its toll. Preparing this music, conducting it, playing it, you feel yourself stretched on some kind of psychological rack."

It is two o'clock on a Monday afternoon when everything

is a bit of a stretch. Rattle and his orchestra are limbering up for a first rehearsal of the Fourth Symphony. No fine detail as yet. This first few minutes is for loosening the fingers, elevating the pulse-rate. We are coming out of the slow introduction – Rattle offers a running commentary over the music, a few preliminary pointers: "Think of these chords as long shadows," he tells his strings; "very little vibrato... and winds, no beginnings to your chords... take them out of the air, pale and mysterious... Now first, lean into that G-flat just a shade" – the intensity is building now towards the *allegro vivace* – he is shouting now over the crescendo – "Reach... reach... reach... but save something for the *fortissimo*... yes, HERE" – and they're off the blocks into the sprint.

So much for the warm-up. Now detail. God is in the detail. "Can I deliver my yearly lecture on the placing of the first chord? Singers, wait until you actually hear the wind chord before you play your pizzicato – it should literally drip off the end of the wind chord..." The late Herbert von Karajan taught him that little trick. So you see, something valid can be drawn from the shadows of former times – discredited times?

Actually, Rattle doesn't see it like that. He sees himself in the very privileged position of having come to this music via Mozart and Haydn – and that in itself by design, not chance – from a generation of musicians whose good fortune stems almost entirely from the benefits of hindsight. "Any thinking musician of my generation cannot help but be a product of the gigantic flux of performing styles which have informed the last 40 years."

The great inspirational "traditionalists" of the post-Wagnerian era, like Furtwängler and Klemperer and Karajan, and now the radical "back-to-basics-with-hindsight" revelations of period performance practitioners as diverse as Norrington, Gardiner and Harropcourt – Rattle has drawn something from them all. But in the small hours when he is alone with just his thoughts, his instincts, his scores, the most important thing to remember is not to remember. The remembrance of things past – remembered interpretation, remembered emotion – is a real problem for young musicians tackling core-repertoire today.

So each performance is a first performance. Nothing can be taken on trust. And Rattle's considerable international reputation (the world continues to squabble over his available dates) is founded entirely upon his ability – his genius – for doing just that. We've heard and yet not heard these great works. With Beethoven, the shock of oneness must prevail, each and every time.

"No one is pretending that we are playing Beethoven's music the way he would have heard it..." But might we be playing his music the way he would like to have heard it? "I know what you're getting at. But it doesn't quite follow. Having worked with period instruments, we know what they will do naturally. The fact that Beethoven wanted something more than the instruments will do naturally does not necessarily stretch all the way to saying that he wanted what a symphony orchestra in the 1960s would have played. Because there are problems with notation for a start. The same notation meant different things in different times. Note values were entirely different: the whole concept of *sostenuto* – 'sustaining' – was different. So you have to evolve an understanding of all the expressive 'grammar' of the time – the *pronunciation* of this music – and how best to apply it now. So I will say to players: always think in terms of one strong beat and two lighter beats."

"Almost the most important thing we've learnt from period performance of this music is the idea of 'pronouncing'.

Phrases must *begin*. It's like words: you never say 'Beethoven' – it's ungrammatical. So that's fundamental. Then there's *vibrato*: I say, think of it as an effect, an adornment, not the norm; think of *sfzandos* as expressive and *forzandos* as really sudden, and *staccatos* as not necessarily short. I think Beethoven means dissonances to be more stressed than consonances – it's the shock tactician in him. So there's your basic vocabulary to be taken and fashioned into sentences, paragraphs, chapters..."

On this particular Monday afternoon, it's very much a word-by-word process. The rehearsal makes haste slowly. "A lot of what we are achieving here with bowings is good – it just takes a lot of Weatsh. Remember, fiddles, as we start the *allegro vivace*, those little grace-note flourishes should be crisp like castanets..." And Rattle works painstakingly with his players on how best to achieve precisely that articulation. Much is implicit in Beethoven's phrase markings (staggeringly, there is still no published *urtext* of the Beethoven Symphonies incorporating all the latest research on extant sources: Jonathan Del Mar's edition, used now by Rattle and others, should be urgently recognised as such).

The slow movement brings different problems: "Where the most pain is, we need the least *vibrato*," he tells his strings – an eloquent note, achieving eloquent results. Likewise in the rumbustious finale, with its husky subversive figures: "Think of them as a rumour..." Rattle's way with words makes music. It's never just about the notes but about the *reasons* for them, he reminds his players, recalling something Kurt Sanderling once said to the Los Angeles Philharmonic while preparing the Ninth Symphony: "I don't care that you play together and in tune, because unless you understand that this sound is *praying* for mercy, you will not get the right expression." And expression is communication, conductor to orchestra, orchestra to audience. Watch Rattle in performance. There's a reason for every gesture: you really do hear what you see. If you see him cue, coax, cajole a player or group of players, you can be sure that what you hear will illuminate, intensify the musical image. The black magic is all in the balance and the phrasing and, finally, the characterisation.

Robert Schumann once described Beethoven's Fourth Symphony as "a slender Greek maiden between two Nordic giants" (namely the Third and Fifth Symphonies). But the Fourth according to Rattle is neither slender nor maidenly. Any more than the Eighth is merely jocular. How perceptions of great art change. At the turn of the century, there were still those for whom Mozart's G minor Symphony (No 40) was "charming and roccoco". Which begs another question. Are we now better placed, better distanced, to view these works objectively, to see them as they really are? Or are our perceptions still coloured by the times in which we live?

"Well, I suppose it's inevitable that we are still looking for things that confirm the way we feel at the end of the 20th century. So we will tend to see more darkness than even Beethoven will have seen. Where people of his time will have heard only affirmation, we might now hear fragmentation and doubt. And yet it still holds true that most of Beethoven is a journey through from doubt to affirmation – culminating, of course, in the Ninth."

The Ninth. If ever a work began groping in the darkness, this is it. Where does it begin? Does it begin? Long before we hear anything, that's for sure. "That opening," says Rattle, "is a real beginning-of-the-universe moment... that whole first movement is like those paintings of Van Gogh where

he started painting on the frame or even the wall, as though the canvas couldn't contain the work..." And this is the moment when Rattle brings on the full might of the modern orchestra with double winds, not for weight but for "relays", so physically taxing is the piece. He's also ready to adjust the size of his band (as Beethoven surely did) according to the size of venue he's playing. Now that's what I call historically well-informed thinking.

Rattle still maintains that he didn't fully grasp the Ninth – and particularly the choral finale, so used and abused in all manner of contemporary connotations – until he saw Part 2 of Goethe's *Faust* as realised by Simon Callow some years ago. "It's the surreal lunacy, the innocence of it. It's that kind of joy, not some grand, monumental, banner-waving triumph. Like the *Pastoral* symphony, it's the grandson of Haydn's *Creation*, only the vision is that of a more troubled soul. It's got the gravediggers, too." And it's got the lowest note possible on the contra-bassoon: "a celestial passing of wind," Rattle calls it. Editors of the day thought it wasn't playable, so they changed it. Along with much else. Again, all credit to Jonathan Del Mar's diligence.

It's at times like this that conductors talk of taking journeys and climbing mountains. Rattle is more specific. "It's K2, isn't it? Right now, it's quite hard to see beyond it." But he will. On the horizon is Wagner, the man who so wanted to re-compose Beethoven in his own image. When you're through climbing mountains, you go in search of the Holy Grail. *Parasol*, Amsterdam, 1997. Now there's a date for the diary.

Rattle conducts Beethoven Symphonies Nos 6 & 7 Birmingham Symphony Hall Tuesday, Barbican Friday; Nos 8 & 9 Birmingham 25 Oct, Barbican 27 Oct. Booking: Birmingham 0121-212 3333; London 0171-638 8891

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# arts reviews

## television

### Heroes of Comedy (C4)

Tommy Cooper was funny. But why? Jasper Rees is left in the dark

They say poetry is the new rock 'o' roll. Before that they said comedy was. So how come there's been an Oxford Professor of Poetry for years while the two comparable forms of entertainment are still not on any university syllabus? You can see it happening for rock 'o' roll, what with all those musicologists poring over Beatles' chord progressions and rushing their findings to the printers. Somehow, it wouldn't work for comedy. A cursory study of *Heroes of Comedy* will demonstrate why.

First up for assessment in a six-part series was Tommy Cooper. A hit like Milton, or Elvis, no one argues about how good he was. He was very good, even great, possibly the best. Unlike Milton, or Elvis, no one can really explain why he was good. That's the thing about being funny: you can't take to bits and determine what makes it tick.

Eminent Cooperologists understand this. Most of those consulted testified that all Cooper had to do was come on stage to get a laugh. Paul Daniels recalled an event at which the comedian was invited to speak. As soon as he stood up he brought the house down. "Now I don't care how much you study comedy," said Daniels, "you can't define that." And even if you can, you certainly can't fill two sides of A4 doing it.

It's not unreasonable to assume that Paul Daniels has over slain an audience by merely standing up. Accepting that as a given, we can therefore deduce that he was reading in Cooper a compendium of his own shortcomings. Cooperology brings that out in people: everyone else seemed to see something in him that they lacked too. Spike Milligan, the most chronically depressed comedian still living, argued that "the face was a call for help". Anthony Hopkins recalled his astonishment at discovering that Cooper was a Welshman. The Welsh are many things but they are not comedians, as Hopkins ruefully admitted and as was illustrated by a cleverly cut sequence showing the two men telling the same joke.

So this was academic enquiry with fairly narrow parameters. Hopkins was the only surprise guest among a host of usual suspects. Gwen Cooper's were the only female memories, and that's because she was married to him (which didn't always sound like a bundle of laughs). And there were no young comedians kneeling at his feet. As Cooper was a proto-surrealist, it might have been enlightening to hear from Vic Reeves.

Once it was established that Cooper specialised in the comedy of error, of getting things wrong to sometimes brilliant effect, beyond that there was little option but to offer endless, very funny examples of his craft. An examiner marking this essay would find it much stronger on quotation than argument. And because this wasn't the first tribute to Tommy Cooper, nor the second nor even the third, some of the quotations were as familiar as the most famous lines. To tee hee or not to tee hee? There's no answer to that question.

## theatre Rat in the Skull, Duke of York's

Stephen Daldry has ripped up a West End theatre for the revival of a classic about the Troubles. But does the production transcend spectacle? By Paul Taylor



Tony Doyle as DI Nelson (left) and Rufus Sewell as Roche: Trapped in the same cycles of mutual hatred

Photograph: Stuart Morris

Why does a renowned RUC detective inspector, despatched to England to interrogate a young IRA suspect and turn him in, choose to throw away his career and flush the prosecution case down the pan by subjecting the Catholic to a ferocious beating the moment they are finally alone? This is the puzzle dangling over *Rat in the Skull*, Roo Hutchinson's award-winning 1984 play.

In Stephen Daldry's revival – the first in a West End season of Royal Court classics – that query is initially upstaged by another question. Namely, why has the director elected to forswear the austere simplicity of the original staging and convert the sedate prosecution-arched purloins of the Duke of York's into a baleful prison environment? The stalls area is now covered over with clanging metallic walkways, and at the centre of these, there's a diamond-shaped, earth-filled pit. The enveloping auditorium is hung with photographs evoking the Troubles. It's all very striking, but does serving a sentence in these surroundings serve the play well?

Though Rufus Sewell's IRA youth has to make conscientious use of his swivel-chair to ensure each half of the audience gets to gawp at his brilliantly acted twitching / flinching resistance to the interrogator's onslaught, there's no doubt that positioning this pair in a central pit heightens a sense of the confrontation's ritual nature and that proximity to the action gives an unnerving immediacy. On the other hand, the design at times imposes awkward distances between interlocutors or seeds people on lengthy artificial detours or picks out certain themes with an over-diagrammatic clarity.

Burly, florid-faced, sportily-blazered, with intimidating body language made all the more unsettling by abruptly switching tack, Tony Doyle's superb RUC man parades the supposedly vast differences between himself and the youth he is interrogating in long, scaldingly sarcastic asides that are, in fact, mordant parodies of Protestant / Catholic stereotyping in Ulster. Doyle looks like a man sitting on a powder keg, but the play fools you at first about the cause and object of this pent-up anger. What it dramatises is his painful realisation that, trapped in the same cycles of mutual hatred, he and the suspect have more in common with each other than he has with the English police, and it is significant that they jointly conspire to be left on their own by the inexperienced supervising constable (Pearce Quigley). William Dudley's design has them literally occupying a different patch of earth, onto which Quigley and John Castle's English superintendent contemptuously toss their cardboard coffee cups at the end, as they abandon them to their ancestral, deadly symbiosis. At such moments, it's a bit like having somebody whispering "geddit?" in your ear.

Looked at from a post-celestial perspective, certain details in the play have dated. It remains and will remain a classic, though, not least because of the compelling ambiguity of the RUC man's violence: an attempt to break free from the programmed patterns of hatred (no case left, no names extorted) through an explosion of what looks (and maybe feels) like atavistic vengeance.

Duke of York's Theatre to 18 Nov; (0171-836 5122)

## music

### CBSO / Simon Rattle

Jan Smaczny on a varied performance of Beethoven's first five symphonies

The stylistic freshness that distinguished Rattle and the CBSO's performances of Beethoven's First and Third Symphonies at Birmingham's Symphony Hall last month has also infected the programming of the whole series. The Second Symphony was accompanied by the three *Leonora* overtures and the much shorter *Fidelio* overture. Potty but provocative, it seems that this combination, with *Fidelio* between *Leonora*s Nos 2 and 3, was first attempted by no less an authority than Mahler. The experiment proved fascinating.

The revelation was what these new perspectives did for *Leonora* No 2. Played on its own this piece can sound sprawling, almost incompetent; heard between the superb finish and assurance of the other *Leonora*s it came over as a much more experimental piece – almost like Berlioz in its use of modulation, and genuinely romantic in its less consciously Viennese image of development.

Rattle's reading of the Second was disappointing after the magnificence of his First and Third. The finale was too fast for comfortable orchestral articulation and, while the hectic speed illuminated aspects of the harmonic structure, it constricted the visionary qualities of this remarkable movement. Worse still was the performance of the Scherzo, a difficult movement to get the measure of at the best of times, with its jerky, disparate gesture and apparent changes of tempo. Rather than responding to the sheer oddity of the piece, it was played straight at a measured pace that killed any chance of fun.

No such problems with Nos 4 and 5 on Wednesday: both works emerged as a near-perfect blend of calculation and instinct with every detail fully formed; over mind that some aspects of string ensemble still need attention. The Fourth Symphony has a tendency to bring out the best in all those who perform it. Even so, the elegance and attentiveness brought to this score showed the work in its true light as the progenitor of the integrity of the Fifth as well as foreshadowing the generous breadth of the *Pastoral*. Nor were there any of the problems with the Scherzo that had marred Rattle's performances of the Second and Third Symphonies. The rapid pace of the finale was daring and, occasionally, dicey, but the grace and energy given to the themes that float above the vigorous opening proved the experiment more than worthwhile.

If Beethoven's Fourth Symphony has a tendency to welcome performers in, the Fifth can be the rock on which they founder. I remember a performance of the Fifth by Rattle and the CBSO that almost failed to register any real effect. In their present reading, it all adds up. Rattle's underplaying of the recapitulation in the first movement made for a thrilling coda, and the frankly militaristic brass in the slow movement added immeasurably to the effect of the violin lines. Even more remarkable was a finale in which the orchestra's clear delight never stood in the way of the thrill and logic of the close.



GLYNN GRITTHS

STUART MORRIS

TONY BUCKINGHAM

## KEY

EXCELLENT

GOOD

OK

POOR

DEADLY

## overview

## critical view

## on view

## our view

Tolerance Davies, one of cinema's genuine originals, makes his first American film based on John Kennedy Toole's novel and starring Gene Hackman.

Despite the genius of the images, Adam Mars-Jones felt strangely charmed. "Slow, but with a uniquely talented film-maker, exuberant *Time Out*. 'A heartbreaking masterpiece,' declared *TD*. 'Like Proust gone to the Deep South,' observed the *Financial Times*. 'Disappointingly, a film you watch at a distance,' concluded the *Times*."

At one of London's finest cinemas the Lighthouse (0171-836 0691) – and selected screens across the country.

Film-making for the big screen, to see it on video is to miss the point entirely.

## THE NOVEL THE ISLAND OF THE DAY BEFORE

The latest from Italian academic Umberto Eco who has written 'The Open Work' and 'The Name of the Rose'.

It's a wonder that the title of the book is 'The Island of the Day Before' when the book is about the island of the day after. 'A lot of learning is a dangerous thing,' opined the *Sunday Times* but praised 'the abundance of the narrative'. 'A subtle parade of recent literary theory and history of science. But it creates minds rather than hearts.' *The Times*

Translated by William Weaver and published by Secker at £16.95.

Eco loves Borges and Calvino. They both knew that beauty was the soul of this kind of art. This novel is over 800 pages.

## THE PLAY RAT IN THE SKULL

The latest from Roo Hutchinson's award-winning 1984 play.

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DICKIE FANTASTIC on the schmooze

'Unless the accolade comprises *la plume de ma tante*, I won't know what the hell is going on'

Wednesday, and a starting invitation arrives requesting my presence at the Institut Français, where Michael York and Peter Greenaway are to be awarded *Les Lettres d'Honneur* in the presence of ambassadorial notables. Convinced that my name has made it to the list wholly by error, I do the gentlemanly thing and phone the French Embassy to check that they've got it right. "Oh yes, please come," draws Cyril, the French cultural attaché. "You are most welcome." And then he adds, "And it would be very nice if you could find some

time to say hello to Michael York." This isn't the offer of an informal chat, of course. This is every schmoozer's worst nightmare: The Mandatory Showbiz Interview. I have nothing against Michael York, but the notion of being part of an international journalistic gang-bang fills me with dread. Also, my knowledge of French is lamentably limited, and unless the accolade being bestowed comprises *la plume de ma tante*, I won't know what the hell is going on.

But I swallow my pride and head to the reception, which is packed with sophisti-

cated French attachés and a sorry-looking Romanian journalist. Michael York is the centre of attention – Peter Greenaway is nowhere to be seen – and a gaggle of French journalists (and the Romanian) surround him, interviewing him in only the way that the French (and Romanians) can. "Monsieur York," begins one. "First let me say that it is the highest privilege to be interviewing you at this time."

"Thank you," says Michael York, and adds, "but the honour is all mine."

"Let me add," says another, "that your influence upon the *industrie cinématographique*

is inestimable, and, on behalf of the French people, I must offer my respect at this moment of honour. And, also, did you enjoy working with Jeanne Moreau?" "Very much so," says Michael York. "Tell me," begins the Romanian, with interminable slowness, "I... have... a... question... for... the... population... of... no... that... is... wrong..." "Hmmm?" says Michael York. "People!" exclaims the Romanian. "I have a question for the people of Romania!" "Hmmm?" says Michael York. "Your question, sir."

"Ah!" says the Romanian. "Yes! It... concerns... Liza... Minnelli... um..." But there is no time, the ceremony is about to begin, and we hurriedly take our seats. Peter Greenaway is still not here, which leaves Michael York standing alone to the left of the stage. After a few choice words – and a promise that after the ceremony we will be shown a lengthy 1895 silent film portraying street scenes from around the world, Michael York is given a medal, which he pins to his chest. There is a rapturous applause. "I very much like France," begins

York, "so thank you very much for this marvellous honour." Then the lights go down, and we are shown the 1895 film, which begins in Paris (lots of people with big moustaches walking very quickly down the street). After Paris, we go to Berlin (also lots of people with big moustaches walking very quickly down the street), followed by Mexico (lots of people with big hats and big moustaches sitting around in dirt). Thirty-five minutes later (Tokyo – very thin moustaches), and I'm afraid to admit I sneak off home.



A WEEK IN  
BOOKS



Roger Whitaker once had a hit song called "I Don't Believe In 'Any More'". I know the feeling. I went off Kipling's poem around A-level time. There was a framed copy of it on the wall of our breakfast room and its ghastly, jaunty hectoring would meet my weary gaze on too many mornings. Its fans might speak of its "moral authority" or its worldly wisdom, but I was never fooled. It's a terrible poem. It is terrible in a variety of ways. It comes on one minute like a British version of the Ten Commandments (thou shalt be cool, modest, restrained, understated, decent, docile, dogged...) then hares off into curious, unexplainedly subversive territory (thou shalt also be reckless, relentless, socially flexible and pointlessly athletic).

If it is full of perverse and non-sensical injunctions. "If you can think - and not make your thoughts aim"; but why not? "Don't look too good"; can you look too good? "If neither does nor loving friends can hurt you" - well, if neither can, it's more likely that you're emotionally null than mature. These are the words of somebody suspicious of intellectual thought, of beauty, of ego, of passion, of tragedy - in other words, of all the highest grades of feeling available to the human spirit. It's no wonder that they struck my 14-year-old self as a pretty lousy blueprint for growing up.

One should not get all steamed about a poem which is no more to be taken seriously by modern readers than, say, the chunterings of Polonius in *Hamlet* or the furrowed-brow faux-seriousness of Jeffrey Archer or the lyrics of "My Way". But we have to face the fact that "If" won the National Poetry Day phone-in. Agreed, only 7,500 people actually voted, a tiny sample given the level of flap and hype that attended it, and the farcical spectacle of the book-makers trying to second-guess what the general public would choose from the entire canon of English verse and coming up with Auden's "Funeral Blues" because it was in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. But "If" still polled more votes than its nearest rival, Tennyson's wonderful "The Lady of Shalott". Professor John Carey, the Oxford don and critic, was asked on Radio 4 how he accounted for the success of "If". He said he was surprised that voters should go for this old-fashioned kind of poetry-as-wisdom rather than for the poetry-as-comfort which the other poems in the Top Ten represented (Yeats's "Innisfree", Wordsworth's "Daffodils"). But the whole point of the Top Ten was that it is neither. It's poetry-as-memory. The thousands of people who voted for "If", and for Walker de la Mare's "The Listeners" and Stevie Smith's "Not Waving But Drowning" are people who do not have a poetry book in the house. They are remembering the lines they learned at school ("The Listeners" was the source of a million comprehension tests) and voting for their childhoods.

John Walsh



Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett  
Picture: Hulton Deutsch

# A marriage of true minds

Why did Mr Barrett, the stern patriarch of Wimpole Street, try to stop his children marrying? Margaret Forster on a sensational new theory

Dared and Done: The Marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning by Julia Markus, Bloomsbury, £20

There is no mystery as to why the courtship of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning has always attracted so much attention. It is, after all, one of the great love stories, full of drama and emotion and with that thrilling exit from Wimpole Street as the climax - what more could anyone want? But the marriage has been another matter. Those 15 years have, by comparison, been passed over quickly. Marriage is staid, marriage is dull, marriage - even in the case of the romantic Brownings - is surely too boring to record. In fact, it is not. The marriage is every bit as fascinating, if not as obviously exciting, as the courtship.

Why, then, you are bound to ask, has it not become as well known? The answer lies in one word: sources. The courtship has the advantage of incomparable primary source material, those magnificent letters Robert and Elizabeth wrote to each other, which were later published by their son in 1899 and have ever since been plundered greedily by scholars and writers. The whole story is in those letters with every line open to several interpretations. Never has so much emotion and intelligence been compressed into so short a time span and the effect is exhilarating. But the marriage lacks that kind of charting. The Brownings, being together, naturally did not write to each other. Robert hardly wrote letters at all, or at least not in comparison with Elizabeth, who spread herself over a large number of correspondents. Not all her letters are published and persistence is needed to collect even those which are available. This in itself has effectively controlled the amount written about this period.

Julia Markus, however, has not been discouraged. She has spent 20 years in the Brownings' "field" and has herself published a fine modern edition of *Casa Guidi Windows* (Elizabeth's long poem about the Italian struggle for liberty). She has gathered together the scattered sources for the marriage years with enthusiasm and scrutinised them diligently. Her interest is not in the day-to-day life of the Brownings - it is curious, but no real impression of what this was like emerges - but in the broader question of how the marriage functioned at different times. In the early years, she chooses to focus on the continuing influence of Mr Barrett. Elizabeth might have seemed, by marrying Robert, to be showing that she loved him more than her father. Nevertheless, her feeling for this difficult parent was still strong, and could have wrecked her marriage, if she had let it, and if Robert had not been so supportive. Appreciating this, Julia Markus takes the basic problem about Mr Barrett: why did he not wish any of his children to marry?

As far as his daughters were concerned, it has always been possible to make a stab at justifying Mr Barrett's objections, since none of the suitors were exactly suitable, especially Robert Browning. But what about his sons? Why did he not want them to marry and continue the family line? Julia Markus's theory, which she drops like a bomb into the middle of an otherwise straightforward account of the Brownings' early married years, is that he was afraid he would have a black grandchild. She cites Elizabeth as declaring she believed she had slave blood in her (though the quotation on which she bases this seems open to other interpretation) and invites incredulity, not to say ridicule, by saying that there was "nothing" in Elizabeth's appearance "to mitigate her own belief in her African blood". It is certainly an interesting tangent to go off at, and the discussion of the Barretts' West Indian background, which it entails, is full of well-researched detail, though to use an analysis of the poem, "The Runaway Slave" to boost this theory seems carrying speculation too far.

There are several other speculative areas in the book which, though lively in themselves, result in a strange lack of balance. There is a jumpy feeling to the shape and style which makes for an uneasy read. In order to float, and try to prove, her theories, Markus has to make space for them by compressing a great deal of the rest of her material. She seems to collapse exhausted after long, discursive passages of the above kind, so much so that she is regularly reduced to one-word exclamations and three-word verbless sentences. It is a relief when she has passed the point of the middle years and comes at last to what she really has to offer. Thereafter, she manages a smooth narrative.

The prize she has to give us is access to 115 unpublished letters from Elizabeth to her sister Arabell, hitherto in family hands. Half of these are already in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library, but it has

always been supposed that the other half contained far more revealing information. A knowledge of Arabell's character - she was very religious and devoted herself to charity work - did suggest that there would be no startling intimacies in Elizabeth's letters to her (she would not wish to shock the spinster Arabell) but, even so, the two were close enough to exchange real confidences. Such excitement, then, to have these letters at last.

And they do genuinely add to what was already known of the one real difference of opinion between the Brownings, even if it is only a matter of degree. Robert was always furious at his wife's belief in spiritualism and did everything possible to prove she was being hoodwinked. In these new letters, the full extent of the battle between them is made clear and so is the part played by Sophie Eckley, an American woman deeply involved in spiritualism under whose spell Elizabeth fell for a while. Julia Markus goes so far as to allege that "a woman came between the Brownings", which has suggestive connotations she afterwards, luckily, dispels. She sees the pair overcoming this unpleasantness, as indeed they did, and remaining true to each other until the very end. I was relieved at this verdict.

In fact, I was relieved by the whole book, written as it is with real passion and dedication. It may seem an odd thing to confess, especially at the end of a review, but I think it is not generally realised how those who have written on a particular subject approach the writings of others on the same topic with a mixture of dread and eagerness. Biographers, especially, remain forever possessive, hardly able to bear the possibility of anyone else knowing more than they do. Yet, at the same time, through knowing so much and being so familiar with the material, they make dangerous reviewers, judging everything by the most exacting standards.

Coming to this book as someone who has written a biography of Elizabeth, I looked for accuracy (and found it) and empathy (which was lacking) but also for something new, something to justify another book (though I had no right whatsoever to ask for such justification). Julia Markus gave me that, if not enough of it - much more use will surely be made of these new letters - and, in addition, she has helped to bring the Brownings' marriage as well as their courtship to greater attention.

## New life in an empty nest

Two new books represent the best and worst of women's studies. By Polly Toynbee

There are a great many books about women that present a puzzling publishing phenomenon. Who wants to read these worthy, weighty tomes telling us about ourselves? Who would ever reach out for a book called *Secret Paths: Women in the New Midlife*? Even we women in "midlife" feel we would rather not think too much about it. And yet now I have been obliged to read it. I am glad I did.

Terri Apter, an American academic living in Britain, has thrown off the old idea of forlorn empty-nesters, women who cannot find their feet once their nurturing days are done. Interviewing 80 women between 40 and 55 on both sides of the Atlantic, she finds them freer than ever, finding themselves as never before.

After all, since women now live so long and healthily, with fewer children and many more qualifications, genuine new vistas do open up once their offspring have gone. If this is beginning to sound like one of those "Life begins at 60" advertisements, this book is more than an exercise in keeping up older women's spirits. Apter has put her finger on a new social phenomenon, rooted in demography as well as culture.

The current midlife generation are the post-war baby boomers, the most powerful generation the West has ever known. From the day they were born, first babies of the new welfare state, they changed the world as they

**Secret Paths: Women in the New Midlife**

by Terri Apter, Norton, £17.50

**Lifting the Taboo: Women, Death and Dying**

by Sally Cline, Little, Brown, £18.99

went and will probably go on doing so from their bathchairs in their sunset homes. In the Sixties, they caused the youth explosion, simply because they were so many, so dominant and so rich. Now bigger and richer than those before and after, this generation continues to set the agenda to an unprecedented and unfair extent, hard on those who follow in its wake. So, if women of this generation refuse to grow old gracefully, then we have the model to roll back the perceptions of ageing. The *despised over-the-hill femme de trente ans* of the last century has become the *femme de soixante ans* now, and - who knows - we may even push her up another decade.

Sociologically, this is a generation of women who have been used to changing all the rules as they go. They are the first to get divorced in great numbers, the first to juggle work and families, the first to be freed from drudgery by washing machines, the first to believe in liberation. If not quite to achieve it. Now, in deciding how to live the rest of their lives, they are having to make it up as they go along.

Now they are no longer dogged by the clamorous needs of others, by conflicting duties and obligations. Apter finds many of them genuinely free for the first time. They feel powerful and influential. They have thrown off girliness and ineffectuality, though sometimes only with a painful struggle when loss of looks and youth can feel like loss of power. She quotes one of Anita Brookner's bleak passages about the shock of seeing her mother's face reflected back at her in the glass.

There is a real subject here, sensitively explored, with surprising discoveries as these women talk of themselves, their lives and hopes. Women and men do grow old differently. Much of it is socially programmed, especially the way we see lines on a male face as distinguished, while expecting women to look like children forever. Some of it is genuinely physical - women's lives are governed by a limited period of fertility. Some of the difference springs from the way children are still central to women's lives, but only an adjunct to most men's. Subtle and complex pictures

emerge of the way this rebellious, innovative generation is pushing back the barriers. All in all, this is a book to fortify the over forties.

There is, however, another deadlier category of women's book - the totally spurious - which brings down right defeat on the whole idea of women's issues. Such is Sally Cline's preposterous *Lifting the Taboo: Women, Death and Dying*. If women and men are ever wholly equal, it must surely be at the moments of birth and death. The very idea of a special women's death is bizarre, for all of us die equally alone. The book is "the first major study of the sexual politics of death in Great Britain, the USA and Canada". And probably the last too, since it is pretty comprehensive, even including "the experiences of female funeral directors".

One almost infallible sign of a women's book in deep trouble is the inclusion of lesbians. Time and again, the women's movement has been handicapped by a confusion between women, and women who are lesbians. The lesbian issue has destroyed countless nascent women's organisations, alienating the great majority of women struggling with the dilemmas of living with men as lovers, husbands, brothers, fathers and sons. Nothing wrong with lesbians, it is just that they have no place in studies about women *per se*. The issues are utterly different.

## Mother's little helper

Can women have it all? Christina Hardyment on Maureen Freely

I started on this witty, iconoclastic, intensely personal book with high hopes. Mothers have long been in need of an articulate, presentable champion, and I remember Freely's first novel, *Mother's Helper*, as quite simply brilliant: a wickedly funny account of a liberated feminist mother who was enlightened, empowered, in control - and a monster. It was written, she now tells us, from personal experience of baby-sitting for such a woman while she was a student at Radcliffe in the early Seventies.

Now the tables are turned. With four children of her own aged between one and 17, and two step-children, she has returned to the subject of motherhood in an attempt to define why, despite her supportive partner and a busy career as a writer, she is not happy. Cash is short. Editors are unpredictable. From day to day her life as mother is a chaotic, roller-coaster ride. She has no clear idea of what she is doing or why; just this uneasy feeling that she isn't doing any of her jobs well.

Who to blame? Other women in her position have blamed men, childrearing experts, governments too mean to provide free day-care for all and, very occasionally, selfish children. Freely turns instead to bite the ideological hand that fed her: the "alternaters" of feminist folklore whose siren songs made her believe she could have it all.

The bulk of the book is devoted to a hatchet job on the entire pantheon of feminist theorists, which is made the funnier by such incidents as

**What About Us?**

**An Open Letter to the Mothers Feminism Forgot**  
by Maureen Freely  
Bloomsbury, £15.99

Freely's own experiences of being - or - maternised through Russian cigarette smoke by Marilyn French in the lounge of Claridge's. Never in the history of feminist writing have so many been rubbished so fast. Friedman, Greer, Millet, Wolf, Dworkin, Paglia are all roundly lambasted for their appalling neglect of the egg-spattered, nappy-drenched realities of motherhood.

Freely is also spot on as she isolates - much embellished by her own distinctly eccentric experiences - the successive stages of the innocent young feminist's raised maternal consciousness: obsession with childbirth; frantic bonding sessions; the small tyrannies of the PTA. Her conclusion is that in face of the daily realities of the endless guerrilla war of domesticity, the second wave of feminism has pathetically little application. It has been merely "a daughter's revolution", defining itself as a rejection of the mother's influence, and therefore doomed to be unhelpful to mothers.

But ... but ... but. Freely has certainly caught a tiger by the tail, but she doesn't manage to do more than drag it to first base. An aggressive editor ought to have pointed out to her that she spends nearly 200 pages

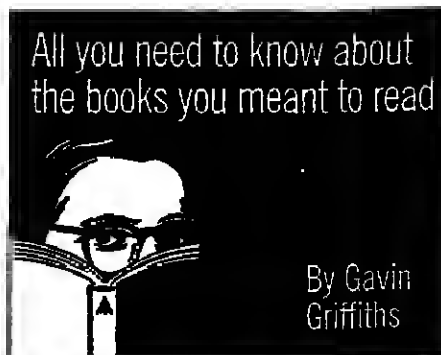
enumerating feminist sins of omission in increasingly fantastical metaphors, but offers only two pages of solutions: a list of directives that amount to no more than a synopsis for the book that I was hoping to find, that looked "at the larger picture, at what children need from their parents, and what parents need for themselves and for their children, at patterns of paid work and unpaid work, as they exist now and as they could be".

Moreover, the book may be called *What About Us?*, but it reads rather like *What About Me?* Autobiographical flashbacks are fine in a long work, but there are far too many here for a book of 215 pages. As one hilariously outrageous revelation follows the next, it becomes less and less likely that the average reader will identify with Freely. Would you hide your husband's wallet so he couldn't go out? Or blame everyone except yourself for the baby you had because you decided on impulse to fling your diaphragm across the bathroom floor? If this is making the personal political, it is, frankly, ridiculous.

Come on, Maureen. Let it go. Parenthood, like puppies, is for life, not just for Christmas. Leave those "childfree" feminists you feel betrayed you to ride their own hobby-horses into the sunset of a lonely old age, and get real: join the rest of the country's more or less philosophical mums galloping away on the Grand National of nurturing new lives. And next time, apply your unique talents to offering us something much more positive in the way of solutions.



## books poetry



This week: *The Waste Land* by TS Eliot (1922)

Plot: Ezra Pound helped Eliot coconstruct this extended, allusive, modernist epic poem, using quotation, bits of foreign languages, shards of satire, dramatic monologue and vatic utterance to produce a detailed map of post-First World War disillusionment. There are five sections:

I) *The Burial of the Dead*. An *émigrée* reflects sadly on her past; a prophet promises to display "fear in a handful of dust"; a clairvoyant fails to see the future.

II) *A Game of Chess*. A posh lady bewails her sterile fate; a cockney woman exposes her barren megalomania.

III) *The Fire Sermon*. A sordid description of the Thames is followed by a series of seedy sexual encounters: with Mr Eugenio, with a cocky clerk, with Wagner's Rhinemaidens (now Thamesmaids).

IV) *Death by Water*. Phlebas the Phoenician is drowned in a soothing and, perhaps, redemptive manner.

V) *What the Thunder Said*. A crowd in search of a saviour transforms into a pilgrim in search of a chapel. The poem ends with "the arid plain behind me" and the poet waiting for rain. There is a Buddhist prayer.

Theme: A meditation on the state of Western civilisation: beliefs have seeped away, individuals are left with sex or themselves. The voices in the poem reveal states of impotence, despair and loneliness: the mixing of "memory and desire". Towards the end, lumps of Western and Eastern culture are yoked together in an effort to find hope or religion. Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism shimmers distantly on the horizon.

Style: A hotchpotch of free blank and rhymed verse striving for unity, laced with the odd phrase of haunting brevity: "Oo Margate Sands/I can connect/ Nothing with nothing"; "I knew nothing/ Looking into the heart of light/ the silence".

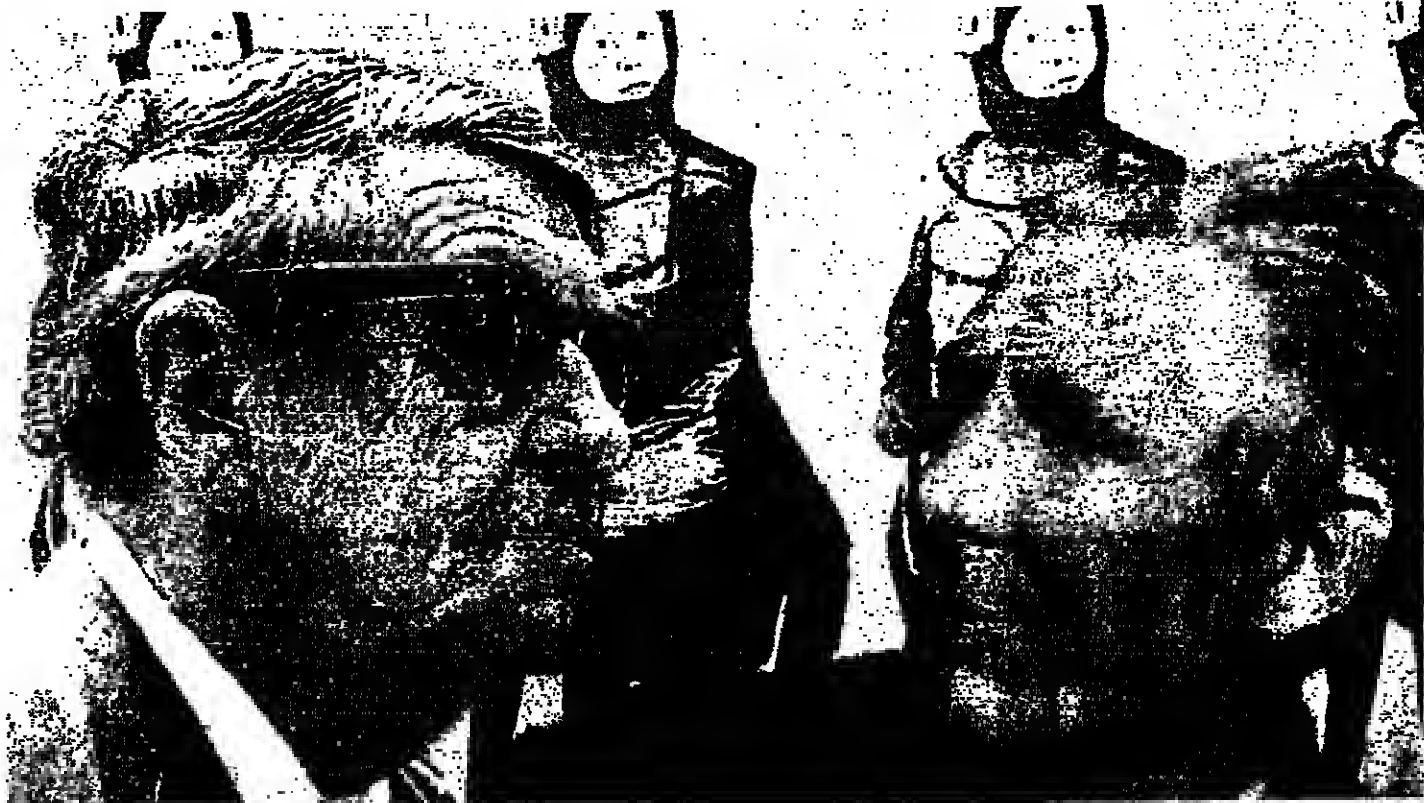
Chief strengths: After 70 years, still one of the most exciting poems in the language. Although much is obscure and some plain silly, line after line conveys an intensity of bleakness that seems both personal and an impartial judgement on modern life.

Chief weakness: The sections are of uneven quality. The cockney woman in Part II has stepped out of an Ealing Comedy.

What they thought of it then: The allusions were unpopular: "A poem that has to be explained is not unlike a picture with 'this is a dog' inscribed underneath" (FL Lucas). Some critics thought it was a leg-pull.

What we think of it now: Eliot is admired, and seen as more neurotic and romantic than he once was.

Responsible for: A lot of adolescent poetry full of rodents walking over glass and condoms by the river bank.



Picture: Giles Auden, National Portrait Gallery, Nelson Deutsch

## Behind the study door

A new biography of WH Auden promises to reveal the inner man, not the gay cruiser. It fails. By James Fenton

In the Prologue to this biography, the author refers to a story by Henry James called "The Private Life", in which a great writer called Clare Vawdrey is found to have a double. There is the public, sociable Clare Vawdrey, who is a dull conversationalist. And then there is the genius, toiling away at his desk. "One goes out," says James, "the other stays at home. One is the genius, the other is the bourgeois and it is only the bourgeois whom we personally know. He talks, he circulates, he's awfully popular... For personal relations this admirable genius thought his second-best enough. The world was vulgar and stupid and the real man would have been a fool to come out for it."

The story of this genius-double left behind at the desk found its way into Auden's poetry, and although it is not quite true that the social and the creative Auden divided along these lines, it is inescapable that the biographer of Auden must devote his main efforts and attention to internal, concealed events, to what went on in the solitude of the study. It is far more important for us to know how Auden met Kierkegaard, or Goethe, or Freud, than to be told who was on the guest-list at Fire Island. What went on all day behind the famously closed curtains is the real story, however much we may also like to be told what happened later in the café, around the dinner table, or in the editor's office or indeed in bed.

Auden by Richard Davenport-Hines, Heinemann, £20

There is a great deal of story (public and private) to tell. Davenport-Hines feels that, since his predecessor Humphrey Carpenter set out much of this very efficiently, he himself is at liberty to take a certain knowledge of the previous biography for granted. But while the present book has genuine discoveries of its own, and though it benefits greatly from the assiduous work of recent Auden scholars, there is no getting around it: the next Auden biography is going to have to be a serious, multi-volume affair. Davenport-Hines demonstrates that 350-odd pages is just not enough.

He is forced to compress. Events which could hardly be considered minor, either to the public, social Auden or to his privately toiling double, pass by in a couple of sentences. "Further encouragement reached [Auden] after Faber in September 1930 published 1,000 copies of *Poems*, his first commercially published book (Spender had hand-printed a small edition of twenty Auden poems in 1928)." This sentence is followed by another summing up the cooties of the 1930 volume.

But anyone who wanted to know how a poet gets going, and how Auden came to those first major decisions of choosing and chucking out, and what, for instance, Eliot or Isherwood or anyone else had to do with it, is going to be

disappointed here. One might also like to know how long that edition of 1,000 lasted, and whether it was a small, average or mighty ambitious first run, according to the standards of the time.

A further example comes from 1945, when Auden "was appointed editor of the 'Younger Poets' series from Yale University Press, and in the next twelve years spotted incipient talents like John Ashbery and Adrienne Rich, whose early poems showed Auden's influence." Compressed here is a large amount of highly important work by Auden, and we would like, at the very least, a list of the poets he chose and promoted in those dozen years. No doubt there is enough material here for a short study. But we must pass quickly here over the tantalising relationship with Ashbery, just as we pass quickly, on the same page, over the collaboration with Brecht.

I don't want to sound ungrateful: Davenport-Hines is a corrective against much received wisdom. The American period is given serious emphasis, and short shrift is given to the idea, once almost universal, that Auden simply went off as a writer when he left England. This is not only to undervalue the poetry of the middle period. It is in America that Auden's secret wealth of prose was amassed. A part of this was made public in *The Dyer's Hand*, for which purpose

Auden apparently sent an assistant to the library to look up what he could remember having written and to copy it out (later they found out about photocopying). There is a great deal of uncollected journalism by Auden, to be found in such surprising places as *Madeira*. The collected prose of Eliot, when it comes, will be fascinating enough. But the collected prose of Auden, the first volume of which is already under way, will astonish us all.

It is Davenport-Hines's failure to boast that he has ever tried to verify or diminish his subject, which would be "decadent and envious", and that he has not fallen for "the repetitive and rampantly cruising young man whom other writers like to imagine". One page before this latter quote, he has been passing on stories about Auden "dropping coins into the boots of a sentryman outside a royal palace, and felling him in his sentrybox". And it is our sober biographer who refers to Auden's "failure" to consummate two schoolboy friendships by sexual activity, almost as if he believed that adolescent camaraderie should lead to a physical climax. It is comic, after so much deviant sex, to find the author state in his acknowledgments: "My wife's financial support, her mercurial and her Anglo-Catholicism have been equally indispensable. The sermons of Father George Bright, of St John the Baptist, Holland Road, Kensington, have influenced some key passages."

## Hating Iago

Jeff Nuttall admires the astonishing energy of RS Thomas

Collected Poems 1945-1990

Phoenix Giants, £9.99

No Truce with the Furies

Bloodaxe, £7.95

by RS Thomas

RS Thomas cannot accurately be described as a hellfire Welsh minister from central casting: the precision and the heady audacity of his metaphors, the seamless, unostentatious surety of his metre and his crafty rhymes obviate that. But his role as a priest is germinal. His creativity was first ignited by his work in a country parish in west Wales. He comes to this community of dour farmers stupefied by work and bleak weather, whom he represents through the persona of "Iago Prytherch", armed with his passionate Christianity and his love of poetry, and he proceeds to get his literary teeth into the conflicts and tensions of the situation.

The poet loathes Prytherch for his brutish simplicity ("Men of the hills, wantoners, men of Wales/ With your sheep and your pigs and ponies, your sweaty females/ How I have hated you for your irreverence, your scorn even/ Of the refinements of art and the mysteries of the Church"). The Christian recognises Prytherch's quality. The parson apologises to his parishioner for using him to win literary laurels. The priest admonishes the poet for the indulgences of art, the poet loathes the priest for his Puritanism.

These Shakespearean passions are generated while the coastal landscape feeds the poet with metaphors that can make the flesh prickle ("the moon/ That amber serpent swallowing an egg"; "stealthily hoarding the last light from the sky/ In his soul's crannies"). These are the themes that produce his most brilliant poetry. He returns to them throughout the 45 years of writing represented in *Collected Poems 1945-1990*.

Other themes and conflicts occur. He loathes the predatory English, but he bitterly admonishes the Welsh for their own cultural suicide ("an impotent people/ Sick with inbreeding/ Worshipping the carcass of an old song"). He is defensive of the Welsh language but aware that a people who base their identity on a language which, like Bantu, Eskimo or Rumanian, nobody else speaks, are embracing a detrimental isolation.

Thomas has a near-Lawrentian loathing of industrialisation, seeing the machine as the enemy of God, but none of these themes strikes deeper music from his soul than when dealing with the disappearing world of the hill farmer. All this places him in the shadow of the Apocalypses, but there are also echoes of MacNeice's religious poems. Filling short of the euphoric flights of Dylan Thomas and the resonant despair of George Barker, he yet avoids the tea-stained ennui of the Movement. His work lies in unresolvable conflicts. He distrusts his century, even the poetry, which he describes as a "faceless, formless amoeba/ with the secretions of its *vers libre*".

All of which seems neatly summed up in the title of his latest book - *No Truce With The Furies*. Thomas is a prolific poet. In the 68 poems of this most recent volume there is much confrontation with the God whom he no longer preaches but with whom he obsessively wrestles as though - in the desert created by the triumph of Mammon, with Prytherch in the geriatric ward and the old agrarian conflicts struck sterile by electro-technology and inept politics - it were his task to ease the loneliness of an abandoned deity by continuing to pester at his ambiguities.

In such grim circumstances the work is not so glamorous. Even some clichés creep in. Truth is dredged up from "bottomless fathoms". A blind child stares into "the depth of love". The old power flickers fitfully when he returns to nature. A traveller knows "from the rustle of unseen water/ falls he has come home". A soaked has "doll's eyes". Then, right at the end of the collection, there is a burst of ludic alliteration. What is the tone here? Is the grim vigil over? Has the loquely deity released him? Is it sanity? Is it possibly the literary equivalent of Rembrandt's last cackling self-portraits? Why is the minister dancing in the ruins of his churchyard? The answer comes in the last stanza of the last poem:

But east of Zion  
there is Zen, that zone  
where zeal can become  
zeal. On zany thermometers  
then, the readings of the zeitgeist are  
never at zero.

This is an astonishing flood of energy at the close of a career of sobering tenacity, illustrating the very nature of energy - something I think this tormented spirit will be happy to have achieved at last.

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## Stings on Guy Fawkes night

Seven of the best: Richard Tyrrell weeds out the most exciting of the latest poetry collections

Simon Armitage has always been good company. He is an actor, who can turn himself into a pickpocket or a car mechanic with equal ease. In any other poet, his dark social comedy would seem zany. With Armitage, it has more to do with a desire to draw on his full repertoire of language. His poems are a mesh of assonances, slang and pace: totally contemporary and original.

In *The Dead Sea Poems* (Faber, £6.99), there is a notable shift to a greater seriousness: pain under the jauntiness. No shortage of the famous wit, but it is subdued - deadpan, if you like. It is a book where dogs have their tails docked for wagging them, and thirsty meo are thumped in the face for sucking up water too desperately. The message seems to be that spontaneous behaviour brings punishment - and, in fact, the title poem is about poetry's sacrificial value. In it, Armitage seems to admit he placed too casual a worth on his early poems, and lost something on account of it.

Yet his work draws so much on flashes of psychological insight or elliptical ideas that we still end up playing a sort of game. We ask: who is the real Armitage? His long poem, "Nine Eleven Ninety Nine", might offer a clue. It patiently follows the course of a Guy Fawkes night. But having amassed details, there is a scotatio of aimlessness and future hassle as a sting in the tail.

Mark Doty, oo the other hand, is fully serious. An American who is HIV-positive, his first British publication, *My*

*Alexandria* (Cape, £7), has earned praise from writers such as John Fuller and Eavan Boland. Inevitably, AIDS is the dormant seed from which the poems sprout, but, as Boland says, they are full of light and sensual detail. Doty's lines have a richness based on hypnotic powers of description, and an exact ear for the right word.

He is a philosophical writer. In one fine poem, "No", childro showing him a turtle prompt him to a comparison between the shielded world of the animal and the egocentricity of childhood. His ability to describe this and other scenes - a transvestite show or an auction or a deathbed drama - and to take a step back to nuzzle at its significance, is something we don't find in British poetry. Perhaps it is his American self-confidence, or his illness, but Doty shows the reader how to perceive things in a new light as mortal and valuable phenomena. The poems are long and loosely formal - "Becoming a Meadow" is in *terza rima* - but not once does the clear progress of ideas falter. He is a true poet whose work is designed to make us think as well as listen.

In Sean O'Brien's *Ghost Train* (OUP, £6.99), winner of the 1995 Forward Prize, railways become an appropriate object for an angry writer who begins a poem with the words, "When I walk by your house, I spit." There are trains steaming over viaducts, storming the shores, rocking their guards, breaking the silence and sealing it again. O'Brien the trainspotter? Perhaps. But he is a born critic who



Simon Armitage: good company

thinks twice before setting verse to paper. The trains roll through the background of the poems with provincial towns, brutalised youths or glimpsed girls in the foreground. The idea might be for a symbol to bind a past and present England the way Rail-track binds its geography: a diesel criticism of Thatcher's society-no-longer-exists credo, in line with the poet's politics. In line of several penultimate "hate" poems, *Ghost Train* has a more nostalgic hue than O'Brien's previous books, marking a softening of his work.

Better known as a publisher than as a poet, Neil Astley has just brought out his second book, *Biting My Tongue* (Bloodaxe, £6.95). His poems are monologues dealing with large, topical issues - war, barbarity, social injustice. They tend to presuppose that the reader comes with a radical political viewpoint. Once or twice, this is true. But Astley has the ability to be convincing as well as passionate, and offers some finely realised dramatic situations. "The Magdalen Home Laundry", a tale set in an Irish

covent that imprisons "falleo" women, sums up a whole society, and is one of the four or five exceptionally good poems in the book.

Jackie Willis is a journalist who once earned a living playing bass with a funk band. Her first collection, *Powder Tower* (Arc, £5.95), has won a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. She is another poet of observation, scrupulously picking out details to form poignant social dramas. Her poems do not offer a large canvas: rather, they are quiet snapshots of ordinary lives in Britain. Willis feels her way into each poem "the way a dancer learns a routine".

Jon Stallworthy is known as a critic, as well as the biographer of Wilfred Owen and Louis MacNeice. *The Guest from the Future* (Corgi, £7.95) holds eight poems, whose theme might be summarised in the lines "women with whom I over slept/ but who were with me when I woke/ and whispered 'Courage'." These are poems evoking women survivors and also poems by other poets - Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* underlying the form and plot of one long poem about a woman fleeing Communism in Poland. Stallworthy's craft is like embroidery, delicately weaving rhyme and rhythm, art and life, present and past literature, 19th and 20th century concerns.

To finish, light poet of the mouth must be Ann Drysdale. Her *The Turn of the Cucumber* (Peterloo, £6.95) is a collection of reader-friendly verse in which she gently pokes fun at our literary pretensions and silly lives.



# Frenzy of a Grand Old Man

Today's grandest Liberal assesses the life of the 19th-century's greatest Liberal: is it a mirror image? By Roy Hattersley

Gladstone by Roy Jenkins, Macmillan, £20

The combination of author and subject makes Roy Jenkins's *Gladstone* (Macmillan, £20) irresistible. The one Liberal grandee to have survived into the modern world has written a biography of the man who dominated Liberal politics for almost half the 19th century. It would be wrong to pretend that the two men have very much in common. Jenkins could never have been convincingly described as "a half mad firebrand". But his account of Gladstone's progress from "hope of the stern unbending Tories" to the People's William inevitably includes insights into the writer's own character.

Jenkins's distaste for Gladstone's acceptance of his party's Newcastle Programme ("a capacious rag-bag but weak on theme") is reminiscent of his own reluctant acquiescence to more than one Labour manifesto. And Gladstone's offer to support a Liberal administration which he did not lead might well have inspired Jenkins's assurance that - having voted against his party whip in favour of joining the Common Market - he had no plans to rebel again. The wording of the two statements is very different. But the intention was virtually identical. Both men believed that honour required them to make clear - at least to their more perceptive observers - that the promises of good behaviour were carefully qualified.

A biography of Gladstone is - as Jenkins graciously concedes - a formidable task. Gladstone lived so long and did so much that even 700 pages can barely accommodate the full achievements of a man who, despite taking his health far too seriously, threw himself into everything that he did with an almost manic frenzy. Jenkins hits his moving target with consistent accuracy. He pays meticulous attention to appropriate detail, judges each incident with the eye of an experienced politician and writes in a wonderfully clear, if occasionally florid, style. His biography is all you need to know about Gladstone including the things you never dared to ask.

The chapter which is devoted to the Grand Old Man's sexual expeditions into London's backstreets is the weakest section of the whole book - coming, as it does, to a highly dubious conclusion about the exact nature of his relationship with the West End prostitutes. It was Gladstone's view that "things are done best by those who agree with them". It is hard to believe that Jenkins enjoyed assessing the significance of the sexual symbols which Gladstone drew in his diary. A man who was really interested in such things could not have written so

generally excellent a book.

It is the treatment of the famous moments in Gladstone's life which best reveals Jenkins's remarkable talent for biography. The stories of the great man's inability to understand the public's sympathy with General Gordon, his long-winded and argumentative domination of the House of Commons and his pathological incompatibility with Queen Victoria are all so familiar that it is difficult to repeat them without sounding hackneyed. Jenkins avoids the tedium by adding his own succinct - and sometimes original - judgement to the description of each episode.

Gladstone is usually given the benefit of the political doubt. Undoubtedly, when the odious Captain William O'Shea first threatened to name Parnell in his divorce proceedings, Gladstone was "more disposed to tolerance than either of his lieutenants". But it was the withdrawal of his support which destroyed the Irish leader in the end. Without Government backing for the Home Rule party, Home Rule had no future. So, as soon as it became clear that Parnell had lost the Liberals' confidence, he had to go. Jenkins claims that the harshest passages in the ultimatum were not Gladstone's own work, and diplomatically does not even speculate about how the existence of the threatening message reached the newspapers. But he has no doubts as to why the Liberal Leadership cracked under pressure from the Methodists during their Sheffield party conference. Not having "any inside knowledge of Non-conformity... they took its fulminations too seriously". He has clearly not forgotten his boyhood in the Welsh valleys.

Jenkins is as impressed by Gladstone's indomitable character as he is by his political achievement. He seems almost in awe of the Grand Old Man's continuing vigour. At the age of 69, Gladstone set out on a Midlothian Campaign, an enterprise which is still unrivalled in the annals of electioneering. He made 30 major speeches, many of them in the open air, in 15 days - addressing (by his own careful calculation) 86,930 people. Often he spoke for several hours. But Jenkins deals in quality as well as quantity. "He never pandered or talked down to his audience. His flattery lay in assuming their seriousness and judgemental capacity."

Gladstone knew that he would win the Midlothian election. So "while it was magnificent [it] was not therefore electorally bold. The purpose for which it was necessary was the re-imposition of Gladstone's authority on the political scene and the sending out of beams of Liberal enthusiasm." It is

comment which gives life to detail.

Very occasionally, the achievement is under-rated. The First Irish Land Bill (1870) is dismissed as a "dead letter" because its reference to "exorbitant rents" (rather than "excessive" as Gladstone first intended) "enabled the courts to interpret the protection narrowly." Certainly, the Land Bill of 1881 brought more relief to peasant farmers than the earlier measure. But the 1870 legislation, as well as helping the worst treated tenants, changed history. It was the first acknowledgment that the demand for Home Rule was based as much on the need for bread as on the hope of independence. And it established the notion that the state has a duty to regulate "free" contracts when the power of the rival parties is so disproportionate that the will of one is imposed on the other. The philosopher, TH Green, thought it an early example of parliamentary socialism.

Gladstone was (at least until the last years of his life) not even a radical. The reforms of his First Administration - including the Great Education Act of 1870 - were the achievements of his Ministers, not their leader. He told John Ruskin in 1878 that he was a "firm believer in the aristocratic principle - the rule of the best. I am an out-and-out inequalitarian." Jenkins concludes that "what he liked best was an austere duke of large fortune." But he also liked scholars, poets, theologians and philosophers. He was by far the most conscientiously intellectual Prime Minister in British history and certainly the most genuinely pious.

Jenkins illuminates Gladstone's complex character in a series of vignettes which add colour to the careful narrative. And the full supporting cast, no less than the star, is painted in vivid colours. General Gordon "was temperamentally unsuited to be the agent of a cautious policy. He was the prototype of a Boy's Own Paper hero, with an additional capacity to seize the attention and attract the admiration of many who had passed the age of boyhood." Parnell, until destroyed by the divorce, seemed set upon a classic path, "an organiser of intransigence who, after a qualifying period in gaol, became a moderate, even a conservative founder of a new party."

The moderate, even conservative party that Jenkins helped to found in 1981 was, as we now know, a staging post on his journey to his natural home amongst the Liberals. And, in consequence, we can make one real comparison between the politics of author and subject. Some Liberals move left as they grow older. Some do not.



Picture: Hubert Deutsch; colour: Michael Sauer

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## From the whore's mouth

Philip Roth's new novel writhes with desire. By Robert Winder

To say the least, Philip Roth's new book begins as it means to go on. "Either forswear fucking others," the hero, Mickey Sabbath, is warned, "or the affair is over". It is a bold ultimatum, coming as it does from a woman who glories in sleeping with four different men in a day (while Sabbath listens on the phone). And it sets the right tone for what follows, which is the last frantic spasm of an ageing puppeteer. Sabbath is a would-be De Sade, a career fornicator with a good line in cynical mockery. His finger puppet show is prosecuted because he manipulates (literally) the audience. And he is messianic about the hypocrisy of tidy lives. "For a pure sense of being tumultuously alive," he insists, "you can't beat the nasty side of existence." But he doesn't quite have the courage of these convictions. He yearns to be a callous seducer, but in fact is rapturously devoted to his lover, a sexual colossus called Drenka. Her death leaves him bereft and howling, plagued by memories of his own licentious life.

We get the full story, straight, as it were, from the whore's mouth. Sabbath is Fortnoy with real women to talk to, which makes this a bigger book (if not quite so taboo-breaking sensational). Roth recreates half an hour of phone sex, right down to the "Oh! Oh! Oh! Mickey! Oh, my God! Ahhh! Ahhh! Jesus Christ! Oh, my God! Uhhhh! Uhhhh!" Sabbath is lectured by his best friend: "Isn't it tiresome, in 1994, this role of rebel-hero? What an odd time to be thinking of sex as rebellion." But he's missing the point. Sabbath is not rebelling against anything; neither promoting the pleasures of the flesh, nor crowing over their destructive side-effects. Sex, here, is a form of panic, a desperate attempt to drown out the noise of death and loss. So beneath its raucous bitterness the novel does have a tender centre. For Sabbath, life without Drenka is unendurable. And other losses come to light: the death of his brother in the war; the disappearance of his first wife.

Sabbath's Theatre  
by Philip Roth  
Cape, £15.99

Roth is on top form rhetorically: the book shakes with savage eloquence. He does, however, seem to be reacting also to a parochial concern. Sabbath's monologues often sound like a cry on behalf of the male sex urge. At one point, he explodes in mock-outrage when a girl (the one at the other end of the phone line) says she loves him for his mind. "Help! I've been mentally harassed! Help! I am the victim of mental harassment! You have extracted mental favours from me without my even knowing and against my will! I have been belittled by you! Call the dean!" It's quite funny, but only as a joke against the campus-politics idea that sex is a crime visited on women by men. As the basis for Sabbath's philosophical pose it lacks grandeur, and leads to a very silly ending indeed: Sabbath watches his wife making love with another woman, and thumps his chest and barks in an expression of primal male rage: *Ich bin ein gorilla*. It's deliberately farcical. But it's still farcical.

Still, the novel writhes with the desire to engage universal concerns - sex urges and death terrors - rather than merely topical controversies. The surprise is that Roth, so unashamed in physical matters, is timid when it comes to striking the tragic note, which seems to be what he is after. Sabbath is compared to King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and Hamlet. This last makes sense - all Sabbath really wants to do is leap into Drenka's grave (he urinates on it instead, in a pungent theatrical gesture). But he hardly qualifies as a tragic hero; he is hardly more sinned against than sinning. And tragedy might have been too grand for him. On the other hand, maybe it's just that Roth wanted him alive, for *Sabbath Theatre II*.

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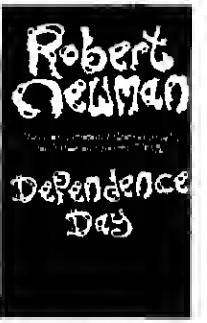
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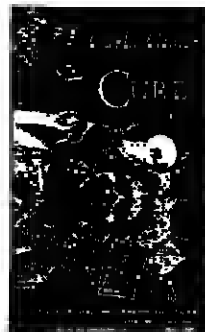
**The China Voyage** by Tim Severin (Abacus, £8.99)

More high adventure from the re-creator of increasingly unlikely feats of oceanic transmigration. Here, he tests the feasibility of sailing from China to America on a bamboo raft. The crew of seven encountered pirates, a typhoon and a killer whale, while suffering ills ranging from broken ribs to near-madness. The craft fell apart a thousand miles from the US, but left a stirring tale in its wake. What next for Tim? Round the Horn by inner tube?



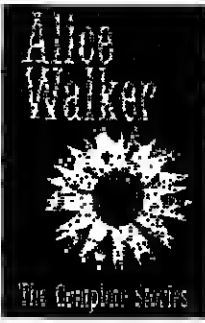
**Dependence Day** by Robert Newman (Arrow, £4.99)

It's only when it's too late that Kevin realises his love for Svetlana, a Romanian high-jumper, was a mayo-spleadoured thing. In letters to Kenny Rogers he tells the singer of the woman he can't have back "for all the milk in Lord Rayleigh's farm". Newman (of *The Mary Whitehouse Experience* fame) has an eye for the detritus of a failed relationship: an abandoned Bounty bar wrapper on the car floor, and the song on the radio that suddenly says so much.



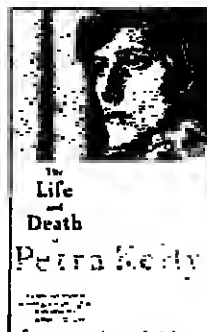
**The Cure** by Carlo Gebler (Abacus, £6.99)

Based on a real-life case, this brooding fiction about a woman's persecution by her superstitious husband is set in rural Ireland a century ago. Her torment is terminated with his chilling remark: "I think we've burnt the fairy out". Sober and sympathetic, it is a corrective to current fashions for Celtic nostalgia and the supernatural. Such events are not confined to the past or the countryside: a similar case occurred in suburban Turin last year.



**The Complete Stories** by Alice Walker (The Women's Press, £7.99)

Alice Walker first realised how much she liked writing short stories when she saw how easily they could be fitted around other things: picking up a child from nursery, falling in love, tending a husband. Tackling marriage, abortion and pornography with a steady and humorous eye, some of Walker's stories can also be movingly offbeat – especially "Strong Horse Tea" in which an old woman braves the elements for a shoe-full of horse's piss.



**The Life and Death of Petra Kelly** by Sara Parkin (Pandora, £9.99)

The world of green politics gives way to the darker milieu of Le Carré in this well-researched account of the leading green activist. Kelly emerges as energetic and intelligent but marred by deep insecurity. She was killed aged 44 by her lover Gert Bastian, a retired German general who also shot himself. Parkin discounts a suicide pact, pointing instead to Bastian's possible secret police links.



**In Pharaoh's Army: Memories of a Last War** by Tobias Wolff (Picador, £5.99)

Sometimes Tobias Wolff writes so clearly, it's easy to underestimate him. In the sequel to his wonderful childhood memoir, *This Boy's Life*, Wolff is now a young man, marooned in the Mekong Delta and running a black market trade in televisions and guns. As suspicious as ever of his own motives (even the good ones), the author successfully punctures any romantic notions about life in a war zone.

# The monster, the bore and the wardrobe

Vanishing children, sex abuse, murderous squalor and ghostly encounters feature in a new crop of first novels. By Susie Boyt



Tania Glyde: sophisticated pastimes

Jaoc Adams's novel, *The Greenway* (Macmillan, £14.99) is founded on a disappearance. One summer day in 1975, while Cassie Maltham and her 12-year-old cousin Suzie are taking a short cut through an ancient enclosed pathway in Norfolk, the child vanishes, never to be seen again. Nobody is found. In time, the police investigation is called off. As a result, the family is left grieving and uncertain. Cassie is left riddled with guilt and the beginnings of a psychiatric illness, and the morale of the detective investigating the case – and subsequently his promising career – ends up in ruins. Twenty years later, still tormented by the event in nightmares, Cassie returns to the scene of the mystery. Then, suddenly, another child disappears in the same way in exactly the same spot. Cassie is the only connection between the two events, and yet she seems to be as much a victim as either of the lost girls.

Adams's narrative has a simplicity that is misleading. The story is compellingly told and rich with psychological insight. The way that the case stirs up personal sadnesses and disappointments in the lives of the policemen who investigate it is particularly poignant and subtle, and provides an interesting depth to the criminal investigations.

*Clever Girl* by Tania Glyde (Picador, £9.99) follows the fate of Sarah Cleveot, a witty teenager with sophisticated pastimes such as sculpture and astronomy and playing in an all-girl trash metal group called the Dildos. Yet Sarah suffers from far more than the usual pitfalls of adolescence. A survivor of child sexual abuse (this is mentioned just a couple of times and only in passing), her body is constantly under attack from almost every man she meets.

Glyde's novel has an impressive range of tone, funny and tragic, heavy as lead one minute and light as feathers the next. In fact, Glyde writes about things of the utmost seriousness with such a shrugging of the shoulders that at times her style seems almost irresponsible. She can describe her heroine being raped by a group of drunken schoolboys who pee on her clothes and tell her she disgusts them, as if presenting an adolescent scrape, just boyish high spirits and horseplay.

Yet this kind of inappropriateness

of tone just goes to show how crushed her heroine's hopes and values have become. Finally, something in Sarah hardens against this kind of treatment and she fights back in an oddly surreal denouement, and although it is slightly disappointing that her triumph can exist only in the realm of fantasy, we cheer her on, nonetheless.

Graham Underwood, narrator and self-styled hero of Theodore Dalrymple's *So Little Done: The Testament of a Serial Killer* (Andre Deutsch, £9.99) is a deeply unattractive character. He reminds you of a crashing pub bore who insists on telling you his life story, dressing up banalities about the world and his wife as if they were dazzling insights of the highest calibre, bedding your ear all night and even following you out of the pub down the street. Then, just as you think you are safely out of his clutches, there he is sitting next to you on the night bus.

Dalrymple gives us a thorough tour of Underwood's mind, from his outrage that people who aren't even vegans can dare to complain about the killing of people, to his detailed chronicling of the seedier side of English life that appeals him, making him see his many murders a duty. Underwood is rather like a malcontent from a *Revenge Tragedy*. The world is a sick place to him, crammed with hideous, loose, masochistic women, thin from smoking or fat from junk food, living in abject squalor and forever giving birth while their violent,

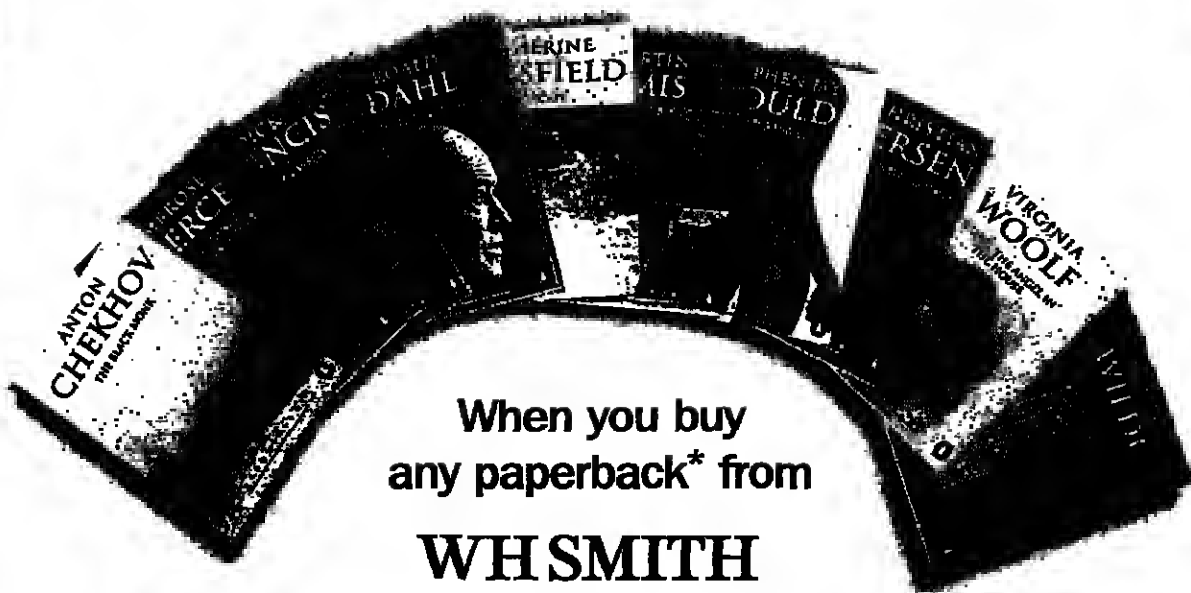
stealing partners are nowhere to be seen. Nothing cheers him. A brief thrill at seeing himself described in an Italian newspaper as "Il Mostro di Eastham" and the success of T-shirts bearing the legend, "I Visited Graham Underwood's House: And Survived" is all he allows himself in the way of amusement.

Robert Girardi's *Mulholland's Ghost: A Novel of New York, New Orleans and the New World* (Sceptre, £5.99) is an ambitious, generous book by an extremely talented new writer. The novel begins in one of the worst parts of Brooklyn. Girardi's hero, Ned Conti, is alternately in despair over his PhD; distraught that he lacks the money to move to a better neighbourhood where he won't get mugged; sad that the girls he knows are drug addicts and incoherent; miserable that his only work prospect is cataloguing century-old papers for a local priest; and, above all, pining for his ex, Antoinette. The last straw is that his apartment, (which used to be a walk-in wardrobe) is haunted.

From here, the novel unfolds into a wild exploration of how to be happy in a world which seems so rife with danger and corruption, and in which everyone is trying so hard not to have any feelings. Ned does not leave a stone unturned in his quest for goodness, reaching hundreds of years back into the past, travelling thousands of miles and stretching his arms, in a gesture of longing, right up to the gates of heaven.

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Who's reading  
whom?

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's latest book, 'Millennium: A History Of Our Last Thousand Years', is published by Bantam



I've recently discovered the great Bengali novelist and satirist Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay who died just over 100 years ago. His novels are like modern Hindi films, frantically busy with characters and plot and awash with Hindu propaganda. But he has a rare gift for evoking a whole world in a few words and is master of the reader's emotions, which has taken me by surprise because I don't often react emotionally to what I read. There are great paradoxes in his novels: he is savagely funny in his stories of colonial life which lampoon the sycophantic babus who assume western dress and habits, yet he himself accepted rewards from the British. You never know what he really feels about the British and there is a tension between the rabble-rousing calls to bloodshed in the name of nationalism and the cautionary voices in his novels.

we recommend...

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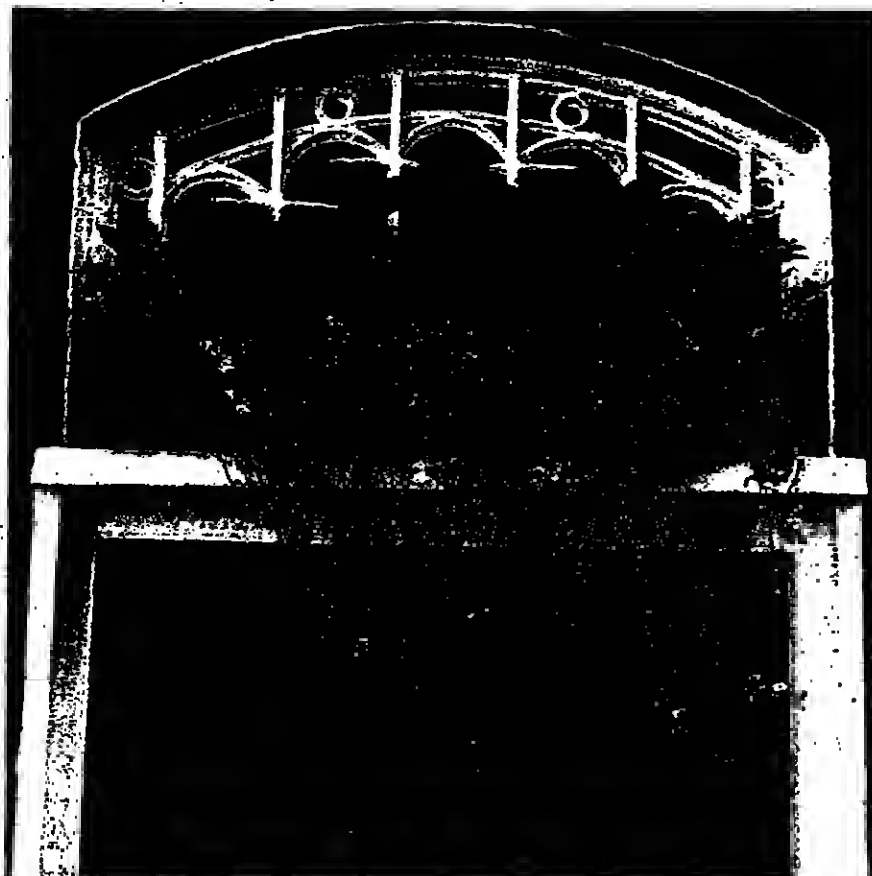
# Escapes

INDEPENDENT WEEKEND SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER 1995

11  
gardening

## Every town house should have one

In cities, window boxes are vital reminders of nature. So don't let them wither in winter: there are plenty of things to plant. By Anna Pavord



Where central heating escapes from inside, you can use indoor plants like winter cherry (top) or cyclamen (below) in a window box  
Photographs: Garden Picture Library

Town houses need window boxes in a way that country houses do not. In a terrace of town houses, fronting straight on to a pavement over a sub-basement, a window box may provide the only possible way of greening up the view. This was clearly understood at the time that many city streets were first being filled with new houses. "What are the casements lined with creeping herbs? The ponderer sashes fronted with a range of orange, myrtle?" asked the poet William Cowper. He answered himself a few lines later. "Are they not all proofs, that man immured in cities, still retains/ His inborn, inextinguishable thirst/ Of rural scenes, compensates his loss/ By supplemental shifts, the best he may?"

At the height of the window box boom in the 1870s, Shirley Hibberd, gardening guru of the day, was recommending at least four changes of plants in a year. We, in an era which has seen an unprecedented boom in garden spending, should at least be able to manage two. The petunias are rotting, the geraniums are wondering where the sun has gone, the nasturtiums have thrown in the towel. It is time for one of Cowper's "supplemental shifts". But what to?

That depends where you live. In London, where central heating escaping from inside keeps window boxes in an almost Mediterranean micro-climate, you can use plants generally grown indoors to great effect in a window box. Big florists' cyclamen, for instance, enjoy the outside cool of a window box rather more than they do the over-heated dry atmosphere of a window sill inside. But they will melt at the first touch of frost.

Displays made from plants that are all the same colour have more impact than three or four plants all of different shades. Use a pale winter flowering heather to fill in the gaps. The cyclamens' own juicy, marbled leaves contrast well with the wispy foliage of heather. If you want white cyclamen, choose a dark-flowered heather. Prices of cyclamen fluctuate wildly, the best bargains of course being in street markets such as the Sunday scrum at Columbia Road in London's east end.

The husky little winter cherry, *Solanum capsicastrum*, a half-hardy sub-shrub with brilliant red and green, is also happy to be left out - but only in places where it is not likely to get

struck down immediately by frost. It only grows about a foot high, so is ideal in a window box. One such plant had self-seeded itself into the paving of Janis Leggett's garden, featured in this column last week, and she said it had grown outside very happily for the last few years. You could combine it with pale variegated ivy, which tips over the edge of window boxes to make soft curtains of greenery.

For a box outside a kitchen window, you might think during the winter of having some evergreen herbs that you can reach out and pick when needed. Thyme, rosemary, sage and marjoram will all grow successfully in window boxes. You could use mounds of purple or variegated sage interplanted with the decorative kale that have become so popular. Or plant the narrow-leaved grey sage 'Hidcote', with bright green moss, curled parsley and a scattering of pansies for colour.

For bravery in the face of the enemy, scarcely anything can beat a pansy. I was watching some in a window box in Elgin in the north of Scotland recently, when terrible westerly gales were ripping through the streets. Though blown horizontal by the wind, the pansies stuck grimly to their posts and continued to fly their standards. You would not think that such a large flower could stand that kind of battering, but it does.

Winter flowering pansies available in garden centres now, are grown from seed sown in May or June, and there are certain seed strains - such as Universal Plus, Floral Dance and Ice Queen - which produce pansies in a wide range of colours. If you were planting pansies with coloured kales, you might choose 'Universal Plus Ivory Rose Blotch', which has flowers with deep pink moustaches standing very clearly out on a cream ground. Or you might want to make a more sumptuous statement by planting deep purple pansies amongst arching clumps of the black grass *Ophiopogon planiscapis*, 'Nigrescens'. It is evergreen and not more than nine inches high.

Height is an important consideration when planting out flower boxes. Flowers naturally turn towards the light, so from inside you are backstage, as it were, looking at the supports rather than the painted backdrop of the window box production. You can sometimes get over this difficulty by dropping the level of the window box, but this will depend on the type of window and sill that you have.

Flowers are generally happier in window boxes that are in a sunny position, though cyclamen will thrive in shade. If you have a very dark area, perhaps a sub-basement where you would like to try a window box, think of ferns. You could grow the shiny strap-leaved harts tongue fern together with the frilly, lacy fronds of a *Polypodium* such as 'Cornubiense', which is evergreen. Ivy is a natural companion for ferns. Try the pale greyish-leaved 'Adam' for a cool effect, or the golden variety 'Buttercup' for a warmer display. Scatter snowdrop bulbs in the gaps for early spring.

Although plants such as florists' cyclamen and winter cherry will give instant colour to see you through the next couple of months, before you plant them you need to think about what happens after winter. Set a quiet time bomb ticking under the winter cherries by planting a thick layer of bulbs at the base of the container. You need to plant much more thickly in a window box than you would in a border. When the display is over, lift the bulbs (which will be exhausted by the cramped conditions) and plant them out in the garden. If you don't have one, give them away to somebody who has! They will eventually fatten up and get back into flowering fettle.

Cocoonate on bulbs that perform early - by May you will be getting itchy fingers and eyeing up the summer bedding. Think also about the relative heights of the plants. Flowers that are too tall will look ridiculous outside as well as in and will be far more likely to snap off in the wind. Hyacinths are gorgeous in a window box because they are themselves so waxy unreal, and you can cheat the seasons by buying bulbs which are already in bud. On warm still days, you will be able to open your windows to let the rich, swoony smell of the flowers drift indoors.

Tulips of the *Kaufmanniana* family are ideal as they have such interesting leaves, striped and mottled like snakeskin. They are rarely more than eight inches high and mostly flower in March. Greig tulips such as the famous scarlet 'Red Riding Hood' are equally suitable, as well as some of the showier species, such as *T. praestans*, 'Fusilier'. Most other tulips will be too tall for window boxes. Crocus work well, as do dwarf iris such as *Iris reticulata*. Start winter plants off in fresh compost. Old compost is as dispiriting as someone else's sheets.

### INSIDE STORIES

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**Going out**  
Places to go and shows to see this weekend  
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### CUTTINGS



I am not the only person to have got the wrong side of the custardians of Italian gardens (*Independent* 16 September). Nancy Patterson of London N5 went on a group trip to visit gardens in Tuscany. "Many of the gardens seemed in no way prepared for our group's visit, though they had all been forewarned. The gardeners arrived late the morning we were there and started their mowing and clipping. The exceptions were I Tatti, very well maintained, Villa La Pietra when Harold Acton was still alive, and Villa Gamberaia which had

been carefully restored after the war and was beautiful." Trevor Goodchild of London E11 was at Villa Lante in July. "Our visit was marred by a long argument between the guide and an Italian. He wanted to know why the Italian government neglected one of the country's great treasures. We had an even more truculent guide at the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola in Lazio. We were rushed through palace and garden in 20 minutes flat." Garden visitors evidently need to ingratiate themselves with some gambits from an Italian

phrase book. A bottle of champagne for the phrase most likely to succeed with the guardian of the garden at Villa Lante.

Michael Loftus of Wootton's Nursery, Wenhaston, Halesworth, Suffolk, is holding a grand end-of-season plant sale. "No bought-in rubbish. No pot-bound fossils," says the notice of sale. Prices have been cut by almost a third: a bigish shrub in a two-litre pot now costs £3.15. Open daily (9.30am-5pm) until the end of October. No mail order.

### WEEKEND WORK

Now, while the earth is still warm but moist after the recent rain, is the ideal time to be shifting plants. It is easier to move herbaceous plants if you reduce some of their top bumper first. Dig them a comfortable hole and fork up the bottom of it so that the roots do not have a battle in getting started. I always put bone meal in the hole as a bribe. I have been shifting self-seeded plants of foxglove, verbasum and *Verbena bonariensis* to suitable homes and none show signs yet of flagging. I have also been experimenting again with establishing small new wallflower plants in the courtyard wall. The few that I had got going in the vertical surface died in the drought this summer. Since the wall still seems very dry, I have wrapped the roots with damp compost in wet tissues and pushed these bundles into holes in the wall. I am hoping the reservoir of compost and damp will tide them over.

It is also time to pick late-keeping apples for eating over Christmas. Store them separately from early and mid-season apples. The ethylene gas given off by ripe earlier fruit will hurry the late ones on too much and they will deteriorate. Stop watering tuberous begonias and gladiolus in pots so they die down naturally. Store the tubers for the winter in a cool, dry place. Flowers of sulphur dusted over them will help prevent mould.

### gardening

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## country

'I found I was on to a winner. Once a restaurant starts to offer wild fungi, it usually has to carry on'

Daniel Butler talks to Clive Houlder, professional mushroom picker



Clive Houlder: 'To be honest I prefer it when there aren't so many fungi around - what I love is the long walks looking for them'

Photograph: Rob Howarth/Assignment

"Ha! See that?" Clive Houlder stoops quickly, his hand disappearing into the leaf litter next to the hedge. He straightens almost immediately, holding out a moist brown dome. "That is a cep - *Boletus edulis* - one of the best eating mushrooms. Come on, there will be plenty more around - this is a record-breaking year."

While Houlder, one of Britain's rarest professionals, the wild mushroom picker, fills his basket, he admits to mixed emotions about the glut: "To be honest I prefer it when there are not too many around - what I love is the long walks looking for them," he says. "At the moment there are so many I find myself in just one place, filling basket after basket before walking back to the car because they're too heavy to carry - in fact I've got 40kg waiting for dispatch and the price is about to plummet."

Houlder stumbled upon his unusual trade by chance. During the Eighties he was a restaurateur in Essex, but decided to move outlets just as property prices peaked. The result was two mortgages and bankruptcy, and he began suffering from serious stress, for which the doctor prescribed long solitary walks.

It was during this low ebb that he saw a programme about Indian women picking

morels for sale in Europe. These distinctive honeycombed fungi were growing on his bonfire so, acting on an impulse, he phoned around his former contacts. Le Gavroche invited him to bring in a sample; on seeing the basket, Michel Roux immediately offered him £100 and asked if he could supply any others. He was shown a selection of the most edible and recognised the St George's mushroom from his walks: the following week he was on the train back to King's Lynn with another £200.

As word spread, so business took off. Houlder still makes weekly trips to sell mushrooms to top London restaurants, but the bulk of his business is now local, supplying a growing band of the more adventurous regional eateries. Rocco's in King's Lynn is a case in point. A Michelin "Red M" restaurant, it serves sautéed wild fungi on a fresh brioche as a starter. "That's the great thing about mushrooms," enthuses Houlder. "It's almost a case of the simpler the recipe, the better the taste."

Although most gastronomes rate the cep as the peak of fungal perfection, Houlder says chefs prefer a mixture - and a variety of colours and textures, too. These, he says, with a smile, may not always be the best eaters, but they look fantastic on the plate. "By weight they may be more expensive than fillet steak," he says. "But they need

only be used judiciously and have a wonderful flavour. Use them for anything from a starter to the garnish for ice-cream."

He is often unable to satisfy demand and as a result, prices are high. Although he sells most of the fruits of his labours to local restaurants at £15 a kilo, any surplus is snapped up by Covent Garden wholesalers. "By the time they've reached a greengrocer or market stall the price will be £25, while God knows what a restaurant would charge."

Obviously Houlder's earnings yo-yo according to the season and weather. March is always the worst month - it's the only one when there are no edible species available - but this year the dry summer hit fungi particularly badly. "At times like that I have to supplement my own collecting with mushrooms brought in from the Continent," he admits. "During really bad periods I have to add a percentage of cultivated oyster and shitake mushrooms - simply to keep the price realistic."

At the moment, this is the last thing on his mind: "Many species are out in huge numbers - in fact the combination of the dry summer and recent rain makes it one of the best autumns ever," he says. A day's collecting in his patch of north Norfolk regularly results in over 15kg of wild fungi. What these will be varies throughout the

year, which begins in April with the 'St George's' mushroom. This then blends into morels and fairy-ring champignons, followed by the autumn's profusion of ceps and other boleti. Although Houlder says fungi can be found anywhere at any time, as a crude rule of thumb, short grass is best during the summer months, and woods come into their own in the autumn.

So what of the famous reluctance of the British to eat wild fungi? Unlike our Continental neighbours who consume them by the ton, we are used to branding anything not safely labelled and stacked on a supermarket shelf as a "roadstool". According to Houlder all this changed with the culinary new wave which swept into the country during the Eighties. "I found I was on to a winner," he says. "Once a restaurant starts to offer wild mushrooms, it usually has to carry on because of the demand."

But even experts have their failings. The holy grail of mushroom pickers is the British truffle and Clive Houlder has never found one. But he's looking.

An excellent guide to picking and eating wild fungi is *The Ultimate Mushroom Book* by Peter Jordan and Steven Wheeler (Lorenz Books, £16.95), published next week. See page 16, for best fungal forays.

## WHERE TO EAT WILD MUSHROOMS

Gwent: every weekend, dozens of kilos of the king of mushrooms - known variously as *Boletus edulis*, ceps, porcini - arrive at the kitchen door of the Walnut Tree Inn, Llandewi Skirid, near Abergavenny (01873-852797). Picked by local Poles, these are shipped on to London; the Walnut Tree is already full to brimming with mushrooms picked by the proprietors, Ann and Franco Taruschia. It will take many generations before English cooks match Mr Taruschia's handling of porcini. They are fired and served with braising gremolata on grilled polenta, they go into melting lasagne with ham, oodles of rich bechamel, parmesan and wildly generous portions of truffles. They are made into the richest of soups. Open lunch and dinner, Tuesday-Saturday.

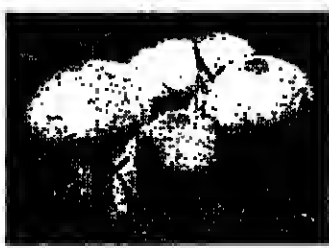


Approximately £30 per person. Cash and cheques only.

Hampshire: Le Poussin, The Courtyard, Brookley Road, Brockenhurst (01590-623063) is at the dainty end of the restaurant market. That said, Alexander Atkin, the chef and co-proprietor, has a healthy wild streak: he is a first-class forager for mushrooms. Given the

weather - dry summer, wet autumn, short warm spell - there should be plenty of porcini showing up in his sauces for excellent home-made pasta. Approximately £30-£40. Open lunch Wednesday-Sunday, dinner Wednesday-Saturday. Access, Visa.

London: It is a Clerkenwell Italian who runs the Alba, 107 Whitecross Street, EC1 (0171-588 1798), but the feel is completely Piedmontese, down to the long, narrow dimensions of the main, original dining room. If a leather-clad biker walks stiffly into the place during dinner, carrying a large parcel, it will contain the white truffles shipped each year from Italy, and brought by courier from Heathrow. The porcini are picked in England, in highly secret locations. First-class charcuterie, great risottos,



good green salads and perfect dolcetto, barolo and barbaresco to wash them down. Approximately £30, with another £10 per person if you nod to the man with the truffle grater. Open Monday-Friday lunch and dinner. Major credit cards and Switch.

Norfolk: East Anglia is carpeted with chanterelles and porcini, but sparsely

populated with people who pick them. When a maverick does hit paydirt, the haul usually appears simultaneously at any restaurant of note on the north coast, from Rocco in King's Lynn to the Moorings in Wells, to Morston Hall, Morston (01263-741041). The folks at Morston supplement this with regular purchases from a supplier, so the likes of mixed wild mushrooms in puff pastry will likely figure in their four-course dinner menus. These are served Lakeland style, in a single organised sitting at 8pm sharp. Open Sunday lunch, dinner nightly. Lunch £14, dinner £23, with wine etc approximately £30-£35. It accepts all the major credit cards except Diner's.

Emily Green

A little local trouble  
A weekly round-up  
of rural rumpuses

In Chesterfield, Derbyshire this week police arrested two men suspected of keeping birds of prey illegally after numerous goshawks - alive and dead - were found at their homes. The men were released on bail pending DNA tests on the birds, to establish whether they taken from the wild. The Peak District National Park is one of the few areas in Britain with a flourishing population of goshawks, but at least five nests have been robbed there already this year. Young birds sell for £1,000 on the falconry black market.

This is the season when bunts hold their annual fund-raising hunt balls. Not to be outdone, next week the East Devon Anti-Bloodsports Group is holding its own event: an Anti-Hunt Celiid.

## A tiny, stick-like figure of a man had appeared, and with him a creature one would presume to be his dog, but which looked more like a leopard'

We came home from holiday in an autumn such as we may never see again. Not only had the grass reverted to green from the sickly dun colour which the summer heat had baked it, but we found the sheep standing chest-deep in luxuriant verdure, rather than on a brown billiard table. Downpours of rain seemed to have arrested the premature decline of the trees, and everywhere the fruits of the season were ripening in astonishing profusion.

Apples? We cannot give them away. Never in living memory have our trees been so loaded. As the sun blazed down in June, July and August, I feared that the fruit would never attain any size - yet somehow the roots managed to find enough moisture, and our Bramley cookers are colossal. The first single apple weighing more than 1lb was a cause for excitement - but when I had picked 50 that size off one tree, such monsters became commonplace.

Pears, also, have been the best ever. During the drought I took the trouble, every other day, to carry buckets of water from a cattle trough and empty them round the base of



DUFF HART-DAVIS

one young tree. The result has been fruit of a good size and an indescribable sweetness.

Wild production has been even more spectacular. Acorns and beechmast are cascading down like hailstones, and fungi have gone berserk.

To return home and find all these riches round about was like having a second holiday. Yet the best surprise lay indoors. In our absence the house and animals had been looked after by Len, a retired farmer, and his wife Joyce. As he arrived and looked

round, Len had mentioned that he liked tinkering with old clocks, so I incited him to have a go at our 19th-century grandfather, which had been keeping time all right, but, whose small central display recording the state of the moon had been stationary for 50 years at least.

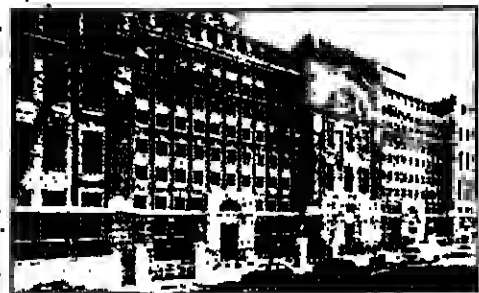
Safely back, we found the place in impeccable order, and after a quick hand-over Len departed for home in New Zealand. He was too modest to mention that he had done anything to the clock. But then, on our second morning, I looked at its face and noticed something odd.

Surely the little picture in the middle was not as I remembered it? At the bottom a tiny, stick-like figure of a man had appeared, and with him a creature which one would presume to be his dog, except that in its length and slenderness it is reminiscent of a leopard. Both stand on the shore of a shimmering blue lake, on which a flat-bottomed boat like a puer is poised. In the background rises a house of faintly Mediterranean appearance, with shallow pink roofs. A tree in the foreground is neither a willow nor a palm. Alto-

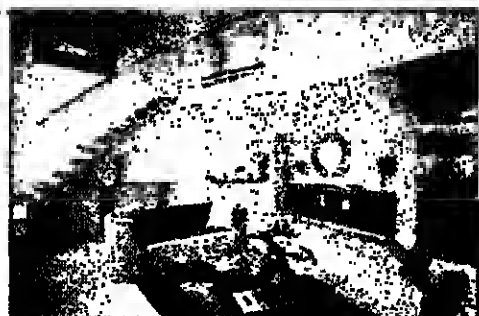
gether the picture seems to hover mysteriously between different parts of the world.

And it is moving! Millimetre by millimetre it is turning. After several days of infinitesimal disappearance, the house has now vanished up to the left, behind the curly clouds represented by the frame. Down from the right has come the cherubic countenance of the moon, its visible crescent growing with astronomically realistic tardiness, until, by the beginning of this week, it was full.

Now I rush down every morning to see how it is doing. There is something magical about the fact that a mechanism dead for half a century has come alive again. I feel like the man in Schubert's song "Das Bild", who stares gloomily at a likeness of his former lover, and in a hair-raising line sees the beloved countenance come stealthily to life. The face that fascinates me is only that of the moon - and, to be honest, the old fellow is rather more rubicund and dimpled than I care for. Yet I find it riveting to gaze at something with which I have lived since I was a child, but which, until now, I have never seen.

AN INVITATION  
TO VIEW  
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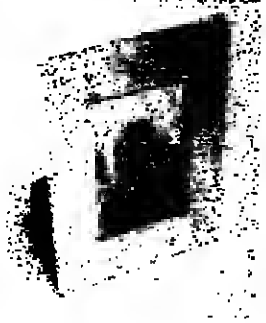




## shopping

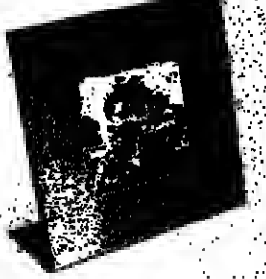
## Six of the best photo frames

**1 Gold, £18.99**  
Classic and handsome, with a sturdy feel, although it's actually made from gold leaf painted on resin. The bronze and silver versions are equally nice. From Checkpoint: 01423 524407; price includes postage and packing



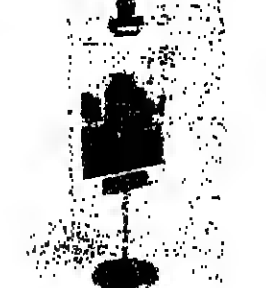
**2 Liberty, from £11**  
If you have a chintzy home, you might prefer a padded frame. Liberty's range, in flowery cottons, are well made and reasonably priced. From Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 (mail-order available; call 0171-734 1234)

**3 Magnetic, from £15.95**  
Simply put the photo on the metal base, stick the magnetic frame over it – and voilà! Smart, stylish, instant framing. From the Conran Shop, SW3, and stockists (Magnetic Attraction, 0171-499 9326, for details)



**4 Inflatable, £8**  
Blow-up photo frame that can be hung on the wall or propped on the mantelpiece. In a range of zappy colours, like lime green, orange and purple. Mail-order from Inflate, 11-13 Corsham Street, London N1 6DP (0171-251 5453)

**5 Abe frame, £17.50**  
For those whose style tends to minimalism, a neat construction by which two pieces of glass fit into the metal stand and are held together with a Boston clip. Call Wireworks for mail-order and stockists: 0171-724 8856



**6 Calypso, £34**  
A cheerful frame hand-made in chunky ceramic by Sally Bourne. It comes in cream, yellow and turquoise with gold extremes, in an attractive brown paper box. From the In Particular catalogue: 0701 0702 027

Photographer: Edward Webb

## Emma Hawkins loves wildlife to death. She is a taxidermist

By Charlotte Packer

**"W**hy have money in the bank when you can be surrounded by beautiful things?" Emma Hawkins says, gesturing to a room filled from floor to ceiling with stuffed animals. Bear skins are slung over the banisters and beneath our feet lies a zebra skin; there are cases filled with butterflies, beetles and spiders, and high above our heads glass-eyed sporting trophies peer at us from their wooden plaques.

With its mixture of taxidermy and curios, Emma's shop, Hawkins & Hawkins, is a miniature Natural History Museum-cum-props cupboard. Her aim was to recreate a Victorian cabinet of curiosities; a room set aside for collections of scientific or cultural interest, covering anything from fossils to stuffed animals and natural history drawings.

To this she adds whatever takes her fancy. The stranger the better: an elephant ear table, an iguana ashtray and a necklace of gold mounted stag's teeth. On a desk two figures dance together in a garden under a glass dome. "It plays three times. I've over seen one of these musical boxes in such good condition. I buy what I like, after all you've got to be able to live with it. I look for things that amuse me."

A large case of creatures from Australasia is Emma's link with home in Australia. Her father, an Englishman, is an antique dealer in Sydney and it was through him that her interest in the trade developed. At 17 she came to the UK and worked for a number of dealers before setting up on her own to pursue her passion. She has been surrounded by stuffed animals for as long as she can remember, as a child she slept under the watchful gaze of a stuffed giraffe, whose head and neck sat next to her bed. "The local vet in Australia used to buy from my father and his waiting room was filled with stuffed dogs. He over had any trouble with late payments."

Most of her stock comes from antiques fairs and auctions. "I only sell antiques; I've no interest in contemporary pieces. I don't believe in killing animals to stuff them or for their furs. But without these stuffed specimens, we would have no record

of what certain animals looked like. There are no dodos left: all we have is a reconstruction which is not the same thing." Stickers on the door declare her support for the World Wide Fund for Nature and Passports for Animals. To those who suggest that by having anything to do with the trade in dead animals, regardless of their age and provenance, is hypocritical she says: "Why throw out something so beautiful to prove a point? Surely that is a greater waste."

Her taxidermy is mainly 19th century, when the Victorians' interest in stuffing animals for scientific study, trophies and ornamental purposes was at its height. One of the few later specimens is the head of a tiger, killed in India in 1926 by the woman it hoped to have for lunch. A framed letter from the Chugula Forest Department describes Mrs Smythies' brave struggle with the "enraged brute". The tiger will soon be leaving for the States. "It's been bought by a vegetarian lion tamer," Emma explains.

Downstairs there are fossils, whale teeth, a hippo skull, a stuffed American Heath Hen – now extinct – a case of exotic birds and a couple of skeletons. An iron mantrap with a grisly past is propped against the wall surrounded by board games, hunting knives, weights and scientific instruments. Behind a Victorian screen, a small dog crouches on a bed of dried flowers. "That's Myrtle. I keep her there because she upsets people. But someone obviously loved her. Look at the trouble they went to when she died."

Wherever you look there are extraordinary things and many are surprisingly affordable. A complete turtle on a stand is about £40, a monkey head £210, while the splendid heath hen will set you back £1,200. Prices for taxidermy are governed by the rarity of the creature and the skill with which it has been stuffed. "I look for life and humour. For birds and animals, Roland Ward was the best. He was able to capture their characters so well."

Her clients are varied, ranging from interior decorators to people who have just been struck by the beauty of a stuffed animal. She recalls one customer who made the expensive mistake of popping in with her seven-year-old daughter.



Emma Hawkins: "Why throw out something so beautiful to prove a point?"

Photograph: Philip Meach

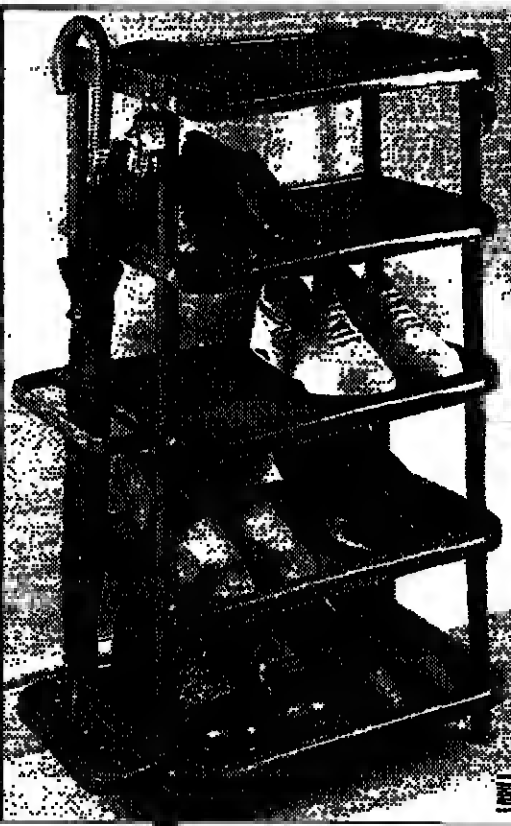
The child took one look at a stuffed Hoppeo peoguin (£135) and refused to leave without it. Penguins are very popular – there is currently a waiting list for them. Other common requests include bats and monkeys, but you can ask for anything and, as long as you are patient, she should be able to get you the llama, polar bear or carwig of your dreams.

Every item has a story. Particularly moving is that attached to the first platypus to reach England. "It arrived in a bale of cotton," she explains, "and when it woke up and scurried out, the dockers were horrified. They had never seen one before so they beat it to death. The owner of the shipyard was furious and fired the men responsible and had the platypus stuffed. It sat in his

office until he died." At 23 Emma is the youngest of only a tiny circle who specialise in taxidermy and curios. "She has a cult following," says Nick Brawer, a regular customer who has arrived to pay for half a dozen ceremonial lances and a stuffed tiger. He has come straight from an auction in Salisbury and wants to show off his latest acquisition. "You are going to love this," he gasps as he hugs a large box into the shop. "I just had to show you." He unveils a dispatch box complete with secret compartments and a fully working mimeograph which can produce unlimited stencils of documents; an early photocopier. Nick, one-time Chulcan roller blade champion, collects campaign memorabilia from the Raj 1877-

1914. "My New York apartment is an exact replica of a British officer's quarters in Madras c.1900," he says. Emma's stock is so eclectic that nothing looks out of place, so if a client changes their mind, whatever she has bought on their behalf is simply added to the other treasures. Her office is dominated by a spectacular silver throne. "I've over been able to sell it," and towering behind her on an old filing cabinet are a pair of fiery red platforms with dagger heels and gold-edged hearts cut out of the soles. "Aren't they fabulous? I had to have them."

Hawkins & Hawkins, 201 Westbourne Grove, London W11 (0171-221 5218). Wed-Sat 10.30-5pm.



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## Check out Arndale Centre

Arndale Centre, Manchester

When you visit Arndale Centre, you'll find a wide range of shops and services.

Arndale Centre is a shopping centre in Manchester, England.

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## Good thing

Good thing is a new range of products from the Arndale Centre. It includes a variety of items, including clothing, home goods, and more.

## Mad things

Mad things is a new range of products from the Arndale Centre. It includes a variety of items, including clothing, home goods, and more.

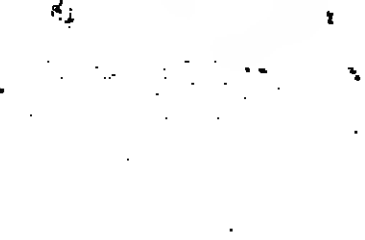
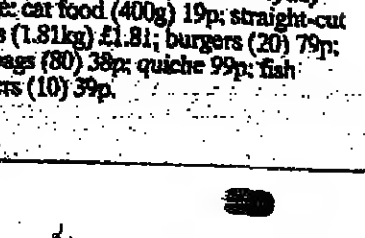
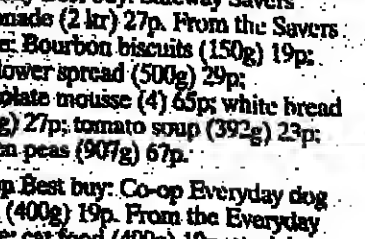
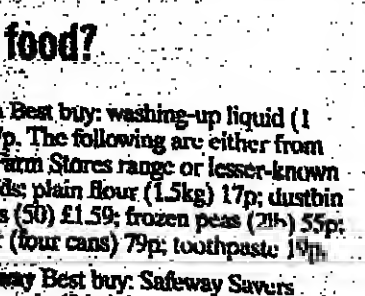
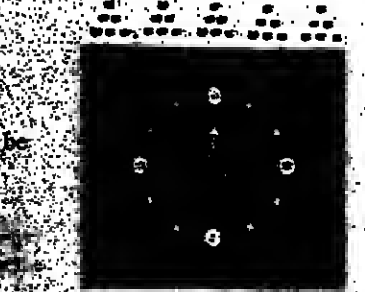
## Where can I buy budget food?

Where can I buy budget food? The answer is at the Arndale Centre. It has a variety of shops and services, including a food court and a grocery store.

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مكتبة الامم



# So you want to set up a shop?

We've all thought about it, a few have tried, many have failed. A cautionary tale by Karen Falconer



Marjorie Bannister, who started the Wax Lyrical shops with £35,000  
Photograph: Edward Webb

Most of us have dreamt at some time of chucking in the job to start up our own business. And often that dream takes the form of setting up a shop. It seems as though there is a shop for everything, and a lucrative niche to suit every potential shop owner. What's more, you can be your own boss and move out of the city to a country town. It might be hard work, but for your own ends.

According to NatWest, there are now more new start-ups in retail than in any other sector, and perhaps surprisingly for a nation which had long regarded shopkeeping as rather a inferior profession, a quarter of those taking the plunge come from managerial or professional ranks.

But, there's a risk that setting up shop is becoming a sort of modern-day equivalent to seeing the streets paved with gold, as Bernard Tennant, retail director of the National Chamber of Trade, warns. "A lot of people who've never been in retail think they'll open a little shop. It looks easy, but many people get their fingers burnt. A lot of people have lost a lot of money," he says. Mr Tennant is not advising people to steer clear of retail. How could he? Everyone has seen the remarkable successes of Body Shop and a plethora of other new shops that have taken local high streets by storm. But, it doesn't alter the fact that 40 per cent of business start-ups collapse within four years – and the shop is no exception.

To succeed requires a more cautious approach, and however much you feel there's a market for the products you wish to sell, a clear-headed analysis is paramount: is the market you've chosen large enough to give you a living; who is the competition; what are the best profit margins you can achieve; how expensive will the right location be; can you afford any staff or can you cope alone; will you expand to achieve greater operating efficiency?

If you are after an easy life, forget it. The hours will be long; the weekends working.

## Wax Lyrical

Marjorie Bannister, co-owner of Wax Lyrical, has not had time to look back to her days as a banking consultant since opening a tiny candle shop in 1990. "I was fed up with banking and felt like pioneering some-

thing," says the 34-year-old who stumbled on the idea while working temporarily in Iceland for the national bank. "I was charmed by the way Icelanders used candles. Houses were completely lit by them, and were so much warmer than electric lights. In Reykjavik alone, there were two or three shops which just sold candles. But people in Britain didn't use them. I decided it was a supply problem: they were only available in grocery and back-street stores and were only promoted for use in emergencies."

Two months after her return to England, she left banking to open a 450 sq ft shop in the relatively inexpensive Richmond. Watching her costs, she spent a mere £35,000 (from a government-backed loan for small businesses) on fitting out her shop and buying stock; she didn't even splash out on a computerised stock-control system. "You have to prove that you can afford to spend money by testing the idea," she says. "Three hundred people bought something on the first day. I was on my own, and couldn't work the cash register, so used a shop box."

Within nine months, it was clear that Wax Lyrical (which launched the floating candle in the UK) had mass appeal, and she and partner, Mark Chessell opened another shop in Hampstead. Five years later, there are 30 Wax Lyrical shops, over 200 staff and a turnover of around £8m. "Every year," she concludes, "I say we'll have it all sorted next year and we can relax, but it never changes. Now I've got a baby too, I don't even sleep."

## Equinox

When Robert Curry set out as a commodity broker, it never crossed his mind that one day he'd be running his own astrology shop and mail order business. But as he began to climb the stockbroking ladder, he became increasingly interested in astrology and decreasingly motivated by trading sugar. "One day I was walking across the room and it came to me. 'Why on earth don't I become an astrologer?'" But, I couldn't work out how I could make a living," he says.

He carried on doing his day job for a few more months to raise some cash, and studied astrology as well as devising computer software in the evenings. Then, in the early Eighties, working from home with two staff, he set up a mail-order business to sell the astrological chart analysis he'd devised.

## DOs AND DON'Ts

**Do:** think hard why you want to be self-employed; think hard about the financial implications; research your market carefully; who are your customers? Is the market likely to change? draw up a realistic business plan; remember that profit is what you're left with after paying for everything; don't spend more to raise your cash; interest rates vary widely.

**Don't:** rush into a property; ask yourself why another person is selling.

"We were the first in the world with the concept," he says proudly. Keeping his costs low, he built his business up over eight years to a regular client base of 20,000. He took a 300 sq ft shop in Neal St in London's Covent Garden. "It was ideal, as it had people from the West End, the City and overseas," he says. He extended his mortgage to pay for the premium of £35,000.

His careful gamble paid off, and two years later, confident about Equinox's future, he bought the freehold of the shop next door, borrowing £650,000 from a French bank. "Our overheads are very high," he says, "but you get what you pay for. If you have the right thing to offer, Neal St is a goldmine. If you don't, it's a nightmare."

For now, the 39-year-old is sticking with one shop, the mail-order business, and the royalties he gets on his chart analysis system. But he is glad he took the plunge. "It's very hard work and I'd have earned more money if I'd stayed in the City. But I'd have less security and capital and wouldn't have the benefits and freedom of doing my own thing."

## Franchise owner

Five years after setting up a franchise, Francine Frazer (not her real name) is selling it. She has no plans to return to her previous job as office manager in a national newspaper. But she has decided that running a shop takes more than she is able to give: now she has two young children; she wants her Christmas and evenings back.

"Seventy-five per cent of the reason I'm selling is that I've got children; the rest because of difficult trading," she says.

Without a burning idea of her own, Ms Frazer and a business partner decided to try for a franchise. They were accepted. As their first preference for a location had been earmarked by an existing franchisee, they opted for an inner-city location.

Initially, in spite of the long hours and a bank loan of £100,000 with a £50,000 overdraft facility, everything was rosy: the business hit its sales targets and the partners opened another small shop for "economies of scale". "It's like being on a rollercoaster: once you get on, you don't think it's possible not to make it," says Ms Frazer.

But, then problems started. The franchisor opened a company-owned shop in a new out-of-town shopping centre. "We were down by the exactly the percentage they were taking," she says. To boot, as they were making staff redundant because of appalling Christmas sales (this period normally accounts for 40 per cent of annual turnover), she unexpectedly fell pregnant. She and her partner struggled on, working constantly, until Ms Frazer became pregnant again in November 1994. "The cost of going out to work was increasingly large," she says, and put the shop up for sale.

Ms Frazer is optimistic she's now found a buyer who will be able to raise the requisite £200,000 for the franchise and also meet the franchisor's approval. "Perhaps I'll try again at some other stage," she says.

Useful information: Running a Shop by Gary Jones, NatWest Business Handbooks/Pitman Publishing, £11.99; NatWest Bank, among others, runs a Small Business Unit to provide help with start-ups and business plans; most towns have a Chamber of Trade which can provide information on the local market place.

## Gear freaks The sailor

Also known as: dinghy sailor, cruising yachtsman (non-competitive sailor), racing yachtsman or "winch gorilla" (competitive yachtsman), yachtie (a derogatory term which implies a greater commitment to sailing outfits than to sailing).

Numbers nationally: nearly three million people are regular sailors.

Favourite locations: the Island Sailing Club, Cowes, the Isle of Wight, during Cowes week (August); the English Harbour, Antigua during Antigua Sailing Week (April); Saint Tropez during La Nioulargue Regatta week (October); the Guinness bar, Earl's Court, during London Boat Show (January); Southampton during Southampton Boat Show (September); Royal Yacht Squadron at any time; at sea.

Magazines: *Yachting World*, *Yachting Monthly*, *Practical Boat Owner*, *Yachts and Yachting*, *Motor Boat and Yachting*, *Seahorse* (the organ of Royal Ocean Yacht Club).

Hazards: sea sickness; 40ft waves; the Bermuda triangle; barnacles; rubbish (plastic cartons and bags can take anything from 10 to 80 years to break down in seawater; cardboard, up to five months; orange and banana peel, up to two years); running into other vessels (particularly if sailing in the Solent on a Saturday afternoon); running aground; falling out with other crew members; falling off the boat (more people go overboard in calm weather than rough because they don't hold on as tightly; likewise, man overboard is quite common while having a wee off the side).

The kit: nautical style looks as good on dry land as on deck – or so say fashion gurus who have helped to launch a sea of deck shoes, Guernsey knits, blue and white stripes and a boat-equipment industry which is far bigger than boat building.

The recent development of "breathables" – hi-tech foul weather clothing – has not only helped to keep the sailor warm and dry, market leaders Musto and Henri-Lloyd are enjoying healthy sales and cut-throat competition. Both launched their version of the latest snug, storm-beating outfits within days of each other and when the Whitbread Race authorities stipulated that crew members must wear one-piece survival suits, Henri-Lloyd came up with the CD-insulated Sistemair (£700) and Musto swiftly followed with its HFX Ocean Dry (£649.95). Musto's latest research has focused not on waterproofing or safety, but on the call of nature. In June the "bog standard" Drop Seat Trouser System was launched. Competitors have yet to respond.

Ultimate gadget: Joyton Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon, £155. Strapped to the arm (or worn in the Eperb compartment of Musto Ocean Jacket, £269) this Eperb or personal beacon will, if you fall over the side, automatically activate an alarm on any passing aircraft and transmit distress signals via satellites to land stations. On the pull of a rip-cord the emergency services can pinpoint you, your yacht and your exact position – if you have programmed your Eperb correctly in the first place. Larger Eperbs, working on the same principle, are available for ships at a cost of £600-£1300.

Bare essentials: chartered yacht, £200-£500 a week; life jacket, £60; boots, £20; waterproof jacket and trousers, £40-£60.

Ultimate experience: hanging in a trapeze over the side of a dinghy, sailing through the roaring Fories in the Whitbread Race; drinking rum punches on deck in the Caribbean.



Base-Layer thermal underwear, £40; Musto Mid-layer Fleece Trouser System, £70; Musto storm cap with Hard-top head protection, £21.95; Douglas Gill 100 per cent rubber and Neoprene boot with non-slip deck-grip sole, £39.95; Namron Neoprene gloves with Kevlar padded palms, £28; Douglas Gill thick water-resistant socks, £6.95; Church salt-water resistant deck shoes with Vibram soles, Kevlar laces and waterproof stitching, £89.95.

Accessories: Nautic Swan yacht approx £150,000-£1m (including a lifelong membership of the Swan-owners club); Crewsaver and auto-safety harness, £119; Cassio Triple Sensor watch with built-in electronic compass, £159; Vauvnet glare-absorbing sailing sunglasses, £60; Travelzeal sea-sickness pressure-point wrist strap, £5.89.

Optional extras: Armolux blue and white Bretoo T-shirt, £29.95; *Secrets of the Titanic* National Geographic Video, £10.95; water-resistant headtorch on fully adjustable headband, £32.50; Magdellan Nav 8500 electronic chart plotter with Navionics micro-charts and in-built Global Positioning System (stars, sextants and other more traditional means of navigation are still useful as a back up), £1300.

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## AUCTIONS

Can you tell an Artuqid jug from an Iznik pot? London's bi-annual Islamic week gives you the chance to try

Twice a year, in April and October, London becomes the world centre for Islamic artworks. Iranian dealers fill the salerooms. Any Anglo-Saxons are likely to be sellers, perhaps eager to see whether the loathed Persian ever left to them by granny will raise the price of a Caribbean holiday.

A few Americans, Germans and Swiss also bid, some affecting to understand the tangled Arabic calligraphy that so eloquently mimics the peaks and troughs of an unpredictable and exasperating market.

Buy for decoration – inlaid Islamic furniture looks good in any room – or do some homework first. Even the western "experts" who mount these auctions regularly blunder, failing to spot fakes or getting estimates hopelessly wrong.

The big auctioneers, Christie's and Sotheby's, are often left with half their goods unsold while the price of the occasional "sleeper" goes through the roof. At Sotheby's last sale, in April, a magnificent 14th-century gold mand spherical jug from northern

Syria, bearing the name of a sultan of the Artuqid dynasty, was estimated at £10,000-£15,000 – and sold for £128,000. But it was among only 17 of the sale's first 60 lots – mainly early Persian pottery and metalware – that found buyers. Sotheby's had estimated the 9th-13th century wares at £2,000-£3,000 or more each, despite a glut of fresh finds exported through Afghanistan that had reduced their value tenfold.

London's most go-ahead Islamic auctioneer is Bonhams whose expert, Diddi Malek, is a half-Persian, half-English Muslim who speaks and reads Arabic, hobnobs with Middle-Eastern buyers and sellers, and has in three years raised her totals to over £400,000 a sale. She has teamed up with Hamid Atighetchi, an Iranian consultant in Islamic art based in London.

Be aware also of the cultural dots that bidding falls into. The westernised Turks buy Turkish goods but tend to ignore even their own Iznik pottery if it bears Islamic calligraphy. By contrast, Iranians seeking out work from

the 16th century height of Islamic art are not concerned whether it is Turkish or Persian.

Among Islamic artworks closest to British cultural and political history is Indian Mughal jewellery. Bonhams' sale, which has an eclectic selection of paintings, carpets, weapons, jewellery and manuscripts, as well as pottery and metalware, includes a handsome Victorian Indian Mughal gold and silver necklace with rubies, white sapphires and an emerald pendant: est £400-£450.

Bonhams (0171-351 7111): Tuesday, carpets (2pm); Wednesday, Islamic art (11am); Sotheby's (0171-493 8080): Wednesday, manuscripts (10.30am) and carpets (2pm); Thursday, Islamic art (10.30am) and Indian art (2.30pm); Friday, cottons (10.30am & 2.30pm). Christie's (0171-839 9050): Tuesday, manuscripts & miniatures (11.30am) and Islamic art (2.30pm); Thursday, carpets (2.30pm).

John Windsor

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## Ploughmen's hunch for the furrowing Finns?

## Six of the best: fungal forays

**Great Holland Pits Nature Reserve (01206 729678)**  
half a mile from Great Holland village centre, off the road to Little Clacton, Essex – the meeting point will be signed, 10am Sun The foray will be led by local mushroom authority, Ian Rose, who will be hunting for whatever turns up. The hunt will be a couple of hours long and is free

A black and white photograph showing two mushrooms with gills growing from a dark, textured surface. In the background, a sign with the word 'Mushrooms' is partially visible, with the letters 'M', 'U', 'S', 'H', 'R', 'O', 'O', 'M', 'S' clearly legible.

**Howell Hill Cuddington Golf Course, Cuddington**  
Way, Sutton, Surrey (0181-393 2120) meet  
between the golf course and the stables,  
10.30am-1pm Sun A scheme to record all the  
fungus varieties found on this small chalk grass-  
land site. Last year they discovered 100 types and  
are expecting to find many more. The foray is led  
by an authority from Kew Gardens. Free

# Things to do,

**Gryllyn Burrows Glamorgan (01792 207623)**  
meet at Jersey Marine roundabout between  
Swansea & Briton Ferry bridge, 10am today  
Led by fungi enthusiast, Teifion Davies, the aim  
is to teach people to identify edible mushrooms  
and to show them varieties to be avoided. Most  
people should be able to take a few home for  
supper. The area is also rich in wildlife. Free

**Nower Wood Educational Nature Reserve B2033**  
*between Leatherhead & Headly, Surrey, guided*  
*walks 10.30am, 2.30pm Sun, 01372 379509*  
*for details* Fungus walks and talks, plus self-  
guided tours of the nature reserve. Highlight will  
be the deadly Fly Agaric. £1 car park, 50p walks

## Pipers call the tune for Gaelic culture

The North/South divide can be illustrated by many things, but the difference in the cultural understanding of a mod is as good as any. An Comunn Gaidhealach has been organising mods for over a hundred years, but never in Brighton and always concealing itself with more tones than two. This week, a plaid-wearing mod returns to Sutherland after 18 years and is expected to attract some 10,000 people. The 1995 Royal National Mod is the third largest Scottish festival (a mod being a highland gathering with musical and literary competitions, not a Vespa-driving Who fan) and brings together around 2,000 contestants. An Comunn Gaidhealach (Gaelic for The Highland Association) was set up in 1891 to preserve Gaelic culture. Evidence that this has become an uphill struggle is indicated by the falling number of Gaelic speakers – in 1891 the number was 241,000, a century later the number had fallen to just 82,000. Annie Draper, newly elected president, says that this year the number of children competing has gone up – “and it is the children that will further the Gaelic traditions in the future”. Competitions will be held in categories including piano, fiddle, accordion, vocals, drama and ceilidhs for both adults and children. *Events in and around Golspie and Brora, Sutherland, until Fri; for further information call 01408 633907/908, tickets £4-£1.50, 9am-6pm daily*

## LISTINGS

**film**

### West End

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**Fast Company** (TV) The Case of the Howling Dog, *See W3p 2(U)* See *One On One* (S) *See 7(S)* *See 2(S)* *See 3(S)* *See 4(S)* *See 5(S)* *See 6(S)* *See 7(S)* *See 8(S)* *See 9(S)* *See 10(S)* *See 11(S)* *See 12(S)* *See 13(S)* *See 14(S)* *See 15(S)* *See 16(S)* *See 17(S)* *See 18(S)* *See 19(S)* *See 20(S)* *See 21(S)* *See 22(S)* *See 23(S)* *See 24(S)* *See 25(S)* *See 26(S)* *See 27(S)* *See 28(S)* *See 29(S)* *See 30(S)* *See 31(S)* *See 32(S)* *See 33(S)* *See 34(S)* *See 35(S)* *See 36(S)* *See 37(S)* *See 38(S)* *See 39(S)* *See 40(S)* *See 41(S)* *See 42(S)* *See 43(S)* *See 44(S)* *See 45(S)* *See 46(S)* *See 47(S)* *See 48(S)* *See 49(S)* *See 50(S)* *See 51(S)* *See 52(S)* *See 53(S)* *See 54(S)* *See 55(S)* *See 56(S)* *See 57(S)* *See 58(S)* *See 59(S)* *See 60(S)* *See 61(S)* *See 62(S)* *See 63(S)* *See 64(S)* *See 65(S)* *See 66(S)* *See 67(S)* *See 68(S)* *See 69(S)* *See 70(S)* *See 71(S)* *See 72(S)* *See 73(S)* *See 74(S)* *See 75(S)* *See 76(S)* *See 77(S)* *See 78(S)* *See 79(S)* *See 80(S)* *See 81(S)* *See 82(S)* *See 83(S)* *See 84(S)* *See 85(S)* *See 86(S)* *See 87(S)* *See 88(S)* *See 89(S)* *See 90(S)* *See 91(S)* *See 92(S)* *See 93(S)* *See 94(S)* *See 95(S)* *See 96(S)* *See 97(S)* *See 98(S)* *See 99(S)* *See 100(S)* *See 101(S)* *See 102(S)* *See 103(S)* *See 104(S)* *See 105(S)* *See 106(S)* *See 107(S)* *See 108(S)* *See 109(S)* *See 110(S)* *See 111(S)* *See 112(S)* *See 113(S)* *See 114(S)* *See 115(S)* *See 116(S)* *See 117(S)* *See 118(S)* *See 119(S)* *See 120(S)* *See 121(S)* *See 122(S)* *See 123(S)* *See 124(S)* *See 125(S)* *See 126(S)* *See 127(S)* *See 128(S)* *See 129(S)* *See 130(S)* *See 131(S)* *See 132(S)* *See 133(S)* *See 134(S)* *See 135(S)* *See 136(S)* *See 137(S)* *See 138(S)* *See 139(S)* *See 140(S)* *See 141(S)* *See 142(S)* *See 143(S)* *See 144(S)* *See 145(S)* *See 146(S)* *See 147(S)* *See 148(S)* *See 149(S)* *See 150(S)* *See 151(S)* *See 152(S)* *See 153(S)* *See 154(S)* *See 155(S)* *See 156(S)* *See 157(S)* *See 158(S)* *See 159(S)* *See 160(S)* *See 161(S)* *See 162(S)* *See 163(S)* *See 164(S)* *See 165(S)* *See 166(S)* *See 167(S)* *See 168(S)* *See 169(S)* *See 170(S)* *See 171(S)* *See 172(S)* *See 173(S)* *See 174(S)* *See 175(S)* *See 176(S)* *See 177(S)* *See 178(S)* *See 179(S)* *See 180(S)* *See 181(S)* *See 182(S)* *See 183(S)* *See 184(S)* *See 185(S)* *See 186(S)* *See 187(S)* *See 188(S)* *See 189(S)* *See 190(S)* *See 191(S)* *See 192(S)* *See 193(S)* *See 194(S)* *See 195(S)* *See 196(S)* *See 197(S)* *See 198(S)* *See 199(S)* *See 200(S)* *See 201(S)* *See 202(S)* *See 203(S)* *See 204(S)* *See 205(S)* *See 206(S)* *See 207(S)* *See 208(S)* *See 209(S)* *See 210(S)* *See 211(S)* *See 212(S)* *See 213(S)* *See 214(S)* *See 215(S)* *See 216(S)* *See 217(S)* *See 218(S)* *See 219(S)* *See 220(S)* *See 221(S)* *See 222(S)* *See 223(S)* *See 224(S)* *See 225(S)* *See 226(S)* *See 227(S)* *See 228(S)* *See 229(S)* *See 230(S)* *See 231(S)* *See 232(S)* *See 233(S)* *See 234(S)* *See 235(S)* *See 236(S)* *See 237(S)* *See 238(S)* *See 239(S)* *See 240(S)* *See 241(S)* *See 242(S)* *See 243(S)* *See 244(S)* *See 245(S)* *See 246(S)* *See 247(S)* *See 248(S)* *See 249(S)* *See 250(S)* *See 251(S)* *See 252(S)* *See 253(S)* *See 254(S)* *See 255(S)* *See 256(S)* *See 257(S)* *See 258(S)* *See 259(S)* *See 260(S)* *See 261(S)* *See 262(S)* *See 263(S)* *See 264(S)* *See 265(S)* *See 266(S)* *See 267(S)* *See 268(S)* *See 269(S)* *See 270(S)* *See 271(S)* *See 272(S)* *See 273(S)* *See 274(S)* *See 275(S)* *See 276(S)* *See 277(S)* *See 278(S)* *See 279(S)* *See 280(S)* *See 281(S)* *See 282(S)* *See 283(S)* *See 284(S)* *See 285(S)* *See 286(S)* *See 287(S)* *See 288(S)* *See 289(S)* *See 290(S)* *See 291(S)* *See 292(S)* *See 293(S)* *See 294(S)* *See 295(S)* *See 296(S)* *See 297(S)* *See 298(S)* *See 299(S)* *See 300(S)* *See 301(S)* *See 302(S)* *See 303(S)* *See 304(S)* *See 305(S)* *See 306(S)* *See 307(S)* *See 308(S)* *See 309(S)* *See 310(S)* *See 311(S)* *See 312(S)* *See 313(S)* *See 314(S)* *See 315(S)* *See 316(S)* *See 317(S)* *See 318(S)* *See 319(S)* *See 320(S)* *See 321(S)* *See 322(S)* *See 323(S)* *See 324(S)* *See 325(S)* *See 326(S)* *See 327(S)* *See 328(S)* *See 329(S)* *See 330(S)* *See 331(S)* *See 332(S)* *See 333(S)* *See 334(S)* *See 335(S)* *See 336(S)* *See 337(S)* *See 338(S)* *See 339(S)* *See 340(S)* *See 341(S)* *See 342(S)* *See 343(S)* *See 344(S)* *See 345(S)* *See 346(S)* *See 3*

## CINEMA

**Funny Bones** Peter Chelsom's film concerns itself with the business of comedy but it's far more affecting as a glimpse at the darkness that hides at the core of all comedians (witness Jerry Lewis, monstrous here as the father of failed comic Oliver Platt and undiscovered clown Lee Evans).

## ART

**Dynasties** In an enlightened exhibition looking at the too little-known art of the 16th and 17th centuries in Britain, the Tate reveals some gems of its collection including works by Holbein, Betts, Oliver and Hilliard. The Tudor world will never look the same again. *Tate, London*

## THEATRE

**Anna Karenina** Giles Croft's inaugural production as artistic director of the Watford Place Theatre is a new production of Helen Edmundson's adaptation of Tolstoy's terrifyingly good love story which was such a success for Shared Experience. *Palace Theatre, Wimpole St.*

## theatre

### West End

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**THE SEVEN YEARS OF CONSUMPTION**  
Stephen Barry's theater world drama *Seven Years of Consumption*, SWP (1) 1749, 1750, 1751, 1752, 1753, 1754, 1755, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1760, 1761, 1762, 1763, 1764, 1765, 1766, 1767, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, 1775, 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783, 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787, 1788, 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2

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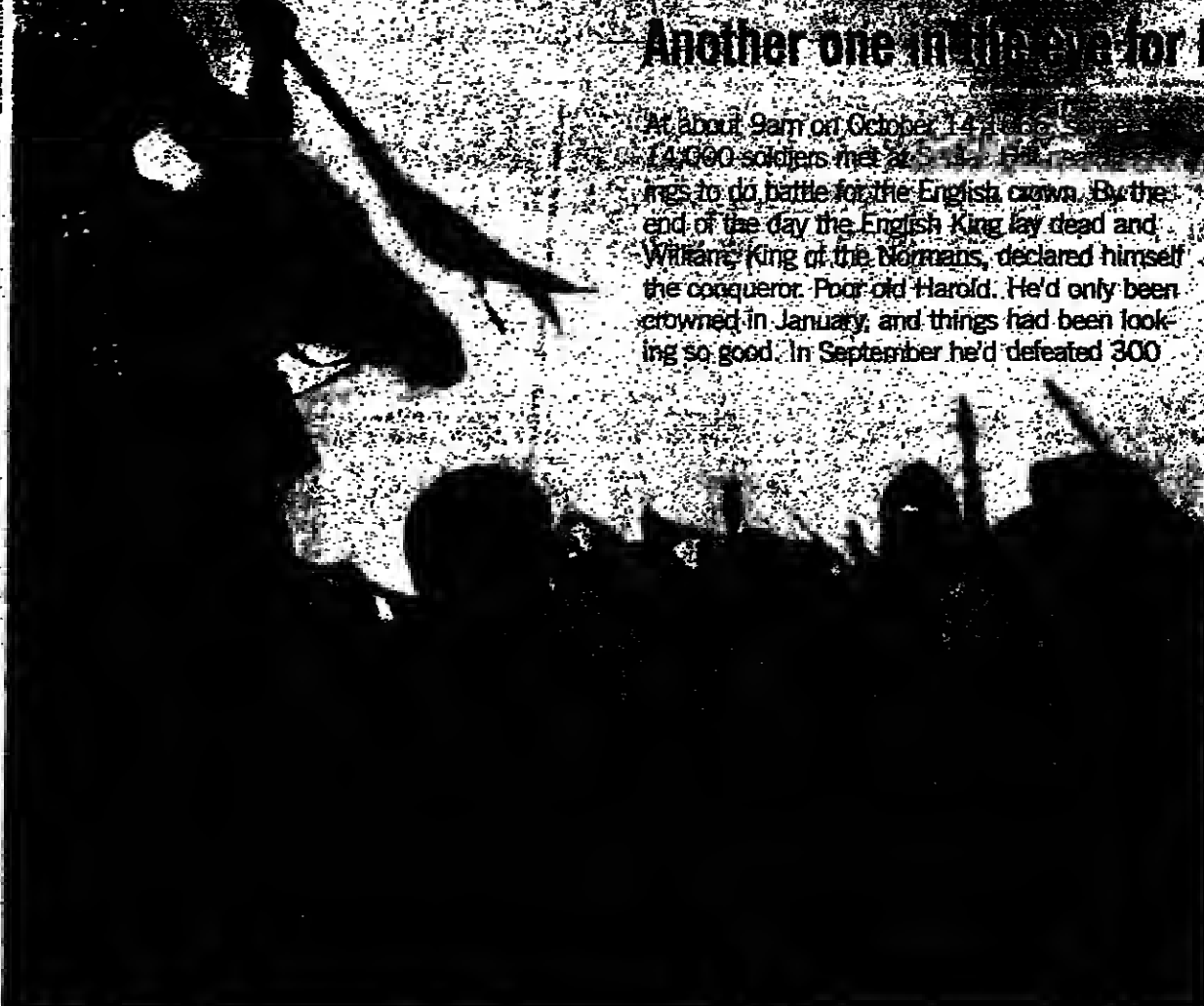


Opportunity

exhibitors, there's the chance to buy anything from a 39kg lift dual retractable buoyancy compensator to a week's holiday in the Red Sea. However, no sub-aqua show would be complete without some talk of gases, and diving alongside Dive 95, there is a conference, Eurotek, devoted to Nitrox and Technical Diving, where you'll be discussing such things as nitrox mixtures and rebreathing. If all that makes you a little out of your depth, then there's a five tank on hand while you wait. The latest underwater gear is on display at the 95/Panet Tek, today.

For more information, ring 011-41-03

ENGLISH HERITAGE



Another one in the line for King Harold

At about 9am on October 14, 1066, 14,000 soldiers met at the Battle of Hastings to do battle for the English crown. By the end of the day the English King lay dead and William, King of the Normans, declared himself the conqueror. Poor old Harold. He'd only been crowned in January, and things had been looking so good. In September he'd defeated 300

shiploads of Norwegian invaders: their king was killed and all that remained of their army barely filled 20 ships. But the exertions were to prove too much for the English army. They had little time to recover before news of the Norman invasion reached them and they were back on the road for the 190-mile march from Stamford Bridge to Hastings. It was a bloody conflict, and Battle Abbey was built on the spot where Harold fell, to atone for the carnage. This afternoon the battlefield will once again witness the clash of Norman and Saxon armies, though without the bloodshed. Comprising at least 500 warriors, foot soldiers, mounted knights and archers, the re-enactment is being staged to mark the publication earlier this summer of the English Heritage Battlefields register which aims to protect the most significant battlefield in England. Armour, equipment and battle tactics are as authentic as possible, with the soldiers being played by professional re-enactors who have researched accounts of the battle. Grounds open 10am, living history & mini-displays 12noon, battle 3pm, Battle Abbey, Battle, E Sussex (01424 773792); £6/£5 concs, £3 kids, English Heritage members free

this weekend

Meet Ken, the 3,000-year-old Egyptian with a shocking smile

Few things are as terrifying as mummies, the stuff of countless camp horror flicks, and scary precisely because you can't see what's beneath the inscrutable cotton. No longer. A new exhibition sets forth the results so far of the Bristol Mummy Project, started in 1981, in which a mummy has been unwrapped and the body extensively analysed. So, who's the man receiving a rude awakening after 3,000 years of oblivious swaddling? Horemkemesi, that's who (let's call him Ken for short) - a chief workman in charge of tombs in the Valley of the Kings. We know this from inscriptions on his coffin, but medical analysis reveals much more. A fragment of aorta indicates clogging of Ken's main artery, which probably caused his death at a ripe old age somewhere in his late fifties. He had terrible teeth, apparently because so much sand got in your food in the desert that it would wear down the enamel - and he tested positive for malaria and a rather nasty Egyptian worm. But, contrary to the popular image of the pyramids being built by starving slaves, Ken was extremely well-fed. The exhibition teaches you all this and more, and thanks to some clever computer modelling, you can stare Ken in the face - if you've the guts for it. After all, aren't there fatal curses attendant upon violation of the Egyptian dead? Curator, Sue Giles, is cheerfully sanguine. "At the time there were organised gangs of tomb-robbars, and they probably spread the rumours of a curse themselves, to protect their patches." Ah well. It's a wrap, guys. Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery, Queen's Rd, Bristol (0117 922 3571); 10am-5pm, £2, kids free

choice

LISTINGS



ROCK  
ANGELA LEWIS

Kaliph British Asian rap combo, with a clutch of cool, politically-ambitious singles behind them, support Black Grape. It's a chance to catch high-energy offerings from their forthcoming album *Seven Deadly Sins*. Kenilworth Forum, London, tonight



CLASSICAL  
ROBERT MAYCOCK

The Future Sound of England - there's a confident title for you. Sunday's South Bank feast of top performers runs from classical to jazz, Indian to African, and they all come together in Shiva Nova's evening concert of creative encounters. South Bank, London



DANCE  
LOUISE LEVENE

Elizabeth Streb's New York company makes its British debut in Greenwich today with *Ringside*, a meaty slice of Streb's punishing choreography which seeks to discover the limits of human endurance by encouraging the dancers to hurl themselves headlong at the walls.

pop  
Cardiff

Pop. Shambles Jarvis Cocker's arch pop outfit, with South London mavericks in support. Cardiff University Park Place (01222-36621) Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability.

London

Rich. Smith, *Rich. Smith's Choice*. The *Rich. Smith's Choice*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *Rich. Smith's Choice*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *Rich. Smith's Choice*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability.

jazz, world, folk etc  
Cardiff

Forward Jim Scales Final ends at the much-loved Four Bars. Four Bars Inn Castle Street (01222-37492) Tonight 8pm, £2.50 concs £2.

London

Special. *Special*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *Special*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *Special*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability.

opera  
Bristol

Supernatural. *Supernatural*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *Supernatural*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *Supernatural*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability.

London

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dance  
London

London. *London*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *London*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability. *London*. Sun 7.30pm, phone for availability.

auctions

Griff. Rugby and other sporting memorabilia, Victorian and collectables. Wednesday 11am. Phillips, 9 Westgate Street (01222-396453).

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church services

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

St James's Church, London. Sun 10am, 11am, 12.30pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm. *St James's Church*. Sun 10am, 11am, 12.30pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm.

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# Welcome to the pleasure dome

Martin Scudamore thought Center Parcs were simply throwback holiday camps with bubbles on. But he shed his prejudices and took the plunge



It's a clear, dark night and you wade through the water chest-high. To one side you hear the screams of people plunging into a freezing pool, then the undertow seizes your legs and you start to float downstream. Feet first or head first, which is best? Too late to change your mind, you're swept under a bridge and round a corner. The water is lit from beneath, adding to the surreal effect as steam from the surface rises into the night air. Slipping and sliding, bumping off the smooth sides, trying to keep the right orientation, you hurtle down through the last few bends in a surge of foam. You're surrounded by bodies, eyes bright with excitement, and you can feel a huge grin forcing itself on to your face. Along with

everyone else, you rush through the tropical foliage straight up to the top to begin the whole descent over again. It's compulsive, and attracts people from six to 60 – but some of us will feel those bumps and bruises in the morning.

The rapids are probably the most exciting of the free attractions at Center Parcs. That weirdly spelled name, and the idea that this may be some appalling marriage of Disney with Butlins, puts some people off. We children of the Fifties dimly imagined a holiday camp still to be a place where you are billeted in a cell and allowed out only according to the whim of the warders. Our misgivings were over-ruled by our children of the Eighties, who were des-

## Where to go

Center Parcs has three holiday villages: Sherwood Forest, Elveden Forest and Longleat. Layouts differ, but the essentials are similar. Villas accommodate two to eight people and have central heating, twin bedrooms, well-equipped kitchen, jet-bath, TV and private patio. Gas, electricity and bed linen are included in the cost. Reservations: 01623 411411.

perate to visit, while we fretted about whether we would ever live down the naff associations of staying at a Center Parc. Yet the concept, which originated in Holland, turned out to be far from tacky. Think of it as living inde-

## What it costs

Prices for self-catering vary enormously according to time of year. For example, the Scudamores have booked a villa for six at Elveden for the weekend at the end of the February half-term. The cost is £271, actually £1 less than the same weekend last year. But for the weekend at the beginning of half-term, the price would be £371.

pendently in a functional but comfortable villa in a pine forest, with lakes and waterfowl around, and virtually all the sports facilities you could ask for. There are roads in the parks but, except at previously set arrival and

departure times, no cars at all – only bicycles.

Apart from anything else, the price is right – far cheaper than spending a long weekend on the Continent. And that double-glazed dome that rose UFO-like from Thetford Forest guaranteed us no rain. Prices can be as little as £15 per person per night, if you choose your dates carefully.

Half-a-mile from your villa, at most, is the pleasurable dome: a huge hemisphere hanging over a compendium of activities. It houses a swimming pool, wave machine, slides, flumes, baby pools, hot pools, freezing plunge pools, jacuzzis, sun beds – and the rapids. The dome is maintained at a tropical temperature, an impression enhanced by

the fronds of succulent greenery trailing everywhere. Entry to all of this is included in the price of your holiday, so if you have young children and are content to sit and watch them play happily in the water, the holiday needn't cost you any extra – apart from the occasional 90p for a giant ice-cream.

Away from the dome, there's a country club with snooker, fitness and weights room and aerobics classes. There's golf, archery, sailing, hockey and plenty more. The sport costs extra, and that can add a quite a bit to the cost of your holiday. But what you spend on sport, you save on self-catering: the on-site supermarket does not exploit its monopoly position. And those late-night swims are free.

## WHAT OTHER FAMILIES THOUGHT OF CENTER PARCS

### PAUL



As a fit middle-aged couple, we liked the way the place makes you feel young – but suffered afterwards from trying to do too much. The sporting and fitness activities were good; but it was a pain queuing to book them.

### RUTH



We knew we were near Center Parcs when all the cars seemed to have bikes strapped on the back. The lack of traffic on the site is wonderful and it is good to be outside in the middle of winter.

### KAREN



The children swam and played all day – no arguments – and the dome became quite magical in the evening. It was dark and frosty outside, yet swimming through a hot-water pool under the stars made you feel as though you were miles away from Britain.

### OWEN (age 12)



It's brilliant. Swimming's the best thing you can do there, especially at night, but the changing rooms often get too crowded. The football training was fun as well. But it's best to take your own bike because the hire bikes are not so good.

### BRYONY (age 10)



The swimming is excellent – even the rapids and pools outside are nice and warm. But the pony trekking was really boring: all we did was walk around a muddy field. My pony was tiny and kept sinking in the mud.

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## FAMILY DEPARTURES

The newly-published third edition of *Travel with Children* by Maureen Wheeler (Lonely Planet, £6.95) is full of encouragement for the travelling parent, such as: "put your darlings in the care of a Balinese *perambantu* (nanny) – they know more magic than Mary Poppins". The extra challenges of travelling with children are covered, such as the non-dependence on – and hence non-availability of – nappies in the developing world.

Butlin's is trying to stretch the summer at its Southcoast World theme park in Bognor Regis by opening of two "interactive flume tides". Terror Trip takes you through Dracula's Castle to the lost world of Hades, while Pinball turns you into a human trigger with prizes for the highest scores. Call 0345 700 700.

The National Trust has a Week of Christmas Walks from Boxing Day to New Year's Day. A list of activities can be obtained by sending an addressed envelope with a 29p stamp to: PO Box 59, Bromley, Kent BR1 3XL. A Family Walk to Celebrate the New Year is to be held on 1 January at 11am at Toller Porcorum, Dorchester. Call 01300 320684.

If your family has no family seat, you can always rent one. Scott's Castle Holidays (0131 226 7615) offers stately homes in Scotland. Shooting, fishing or just feeling snug are some activities on offer.

West Somerset Railway (01643 704996) is staging several family events between now and Christmas. Next weekend, Minehead station meets Thomas the Tank. "Santa

Specials" are running on the first, third and fourth weekends in December. Christmas specials are also being run by Kirkcaldy Light Railway (01484 865727) and the Keighley

and Worth Valley Railway (01535 645214) in West Yorkshire. New Year's Day is Family Day at the Embsay Steam Railway (01756 794727), near Skipton in North Yorkshire.

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# How to get the kids skiing and still have

The Channel Tunnel means easier access to the pistes. Christian Wolmar and his family put the London to Les Arcs connection to the test

There is now a new way for skiers to get to the Alps. The opening of the Channel Tunnel with fast trains direct to Lille and Paris offers a potentially relaxing and easy way to get to the slopes, especially as many resorts are within a short bus or taxi ride from the little stations along the line from Chambéry to Bourg St Maurice.

We have been to Les Arcs for several years running partly because it offers good skiing for all grades but mainly because the ski school for the children has proved really excellent. The resort is just nine miles up a few hairpin bends from Bourg St Maurice, the terminus of the train through the Savoie: so letting the train take the strain seemed an obvious thing to do.

But strain there still was. Skiers were clearly not on the minds of those devising the initial train schedules through the tunnel last season. When I tried to book my family on the service from Lille to Bourg St Maurice, SNCF, the French railway company, told me that the first Eurostar train out of London missed the high speed TGV connection at Lille for a Lyon train by five minutes. They told me I would have to change in Paris, taking a taxi across town from the Gare du Nord to the Gare de Lyon to connect with the TGV service to Bourg St Maurice.

That was the plan anyway. But TGV seats can only be booked two months in advance and on the appointed day all the seats on the Bourg train had already been sold. The reason was that people booking within France were allocated seats by the computer from midnight on the relevant day. SNCF in London could not access the computer until normal working hours, by which time all the seats had gone as we were travelling at the hectic pre-Easter weekend.

Back to the drawing board, we were booked on a Eurostar leaving London at 7.23am, then a TGV from Paris to Chambéry, and then a slow local to Bourg. The journey was scheduled to take 12 hours and indeed it did. All three trains were comfortable, though the first two were crowded, and the children, even the five-year-old, really enjoyed the journey as well as catching up on their sleep. A 150F (£20) 20-minute taxi ride and we were in our apartment.

Travelling across Paris, though difficult because skiing trips necessarily entail lots of luggage, did give us a break and a couple of hours in one of Europe's great cities. But the hassle of dumping our luggage in amazingly expensive lockers (70F, or just over £9) and the difficulty of finding a good cheap restaurant near the Gare du Lyon means that on balance, next time we would avoid Paris. We stayed two weeks in Les Arcs 1800 which last Easter had more snow than anyone could remember for the spring. Pretty it ain't, but our apartment virtually gave out on to the slopes, dispensing with those early morning, problematic walks with skis, a big bonus when you've got a five-year-old in tow.

The ski school lived up to expectation and the two eldest children both earned bronze *chamois* in the ski races so beloved of the French. The little one, Misha, easily passed her one-star test and progressed to the two-star class though she just failed the eventual test. The French are not sentimental about these matters: if you are not good enough, you fail even if you are only five. However, taking her on the slopes for two weeks – despite a bout of chicken pox which kept her off skis for a few afternoons, even though she insisted on skiing in the mornings – meant that by the end of the holiday she had really cracked skiing, dancing down the bumps on the reds.

Five is an excellent age to do this. Misha is a toughy and enjoyed skiing at four – and even at three. As one ski teacher put it: "they learn in a day at four what takes a week at three". But at five she had the balance and the physical courage to enjoy it thoroughly, picking herself up from the falls without complaint. She is now a real skier.

The skiing in the resort is really extensive, with plenty of pleasant reds and no shortage of blacks. Certainly, there were lots of different runs for me and my two eldest, who now swoop down the black runs with confidence. However, there is no really challenging black run, and the most difficult face is from the top of Aiguille Rouge, which is often closed.

The return journey was equally smooth: even though it was pouring with rain in Chambéry when we had to change and the platform had no roof. There were potentially chaotic scenes as hundreds of people, many with skis, piled on to the TGV train but French stations cleverly have little diagrams to show exactly where each carriage will be when the train arrives. Once inside the train, the journey was wonderfully relaxing and in Paris we even had time to pop up to Montmartre for that impressive view of the city.

Overall there is no doubt that the train wins out compared with the nightmares of either driving for 12 hours or the hassles of those ghastly early morning flights. The ensuing four-hour transfers are often made longer by ski companies who don't seem to realise that if they hurried up, you could get an extra half day's skiing.

But with such scanty schedules and poor connections, SNCF and Eurostar are going to have to try a lot harder before they attract all but the real rail enthusiasts to what is the best way of travelling to the Alps.



Photographs: Ski Shoot/Offshoot

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## travel

# A castaway among the humming birds, goats and lobsters

Jamie Ross follows the trail of the real Robinson Crusoe in Chile

In Chile, geography dictates that you can go either north or south. I went west. Someone heading in this direction usually has sights set on Easter Island, a mid-Pacific, five-hour hop from Santiago.

However, often overlooked by those poring over their atlases, bemused by the country's extraordinary shape, is a small archipelago, called Juan Fernandez, 700 kilometres west of Valparaiso.

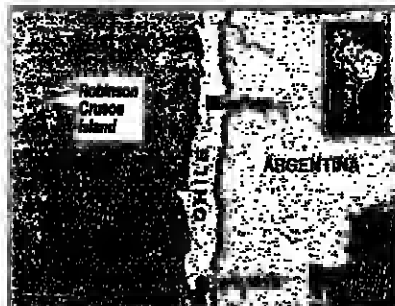
Here is Robinson Crusoe Island. It is not a theme park nor an old Disney set, but a National Park and home to a host of plants and humming birds. There are about six hundred people, too, most of whom are dependent for a living, one way or another, on lobsters.

The real Robinson Crusoe and role-model for Daniel Defoe, the castaway's creator, was the early 18th-century seafarer Alexander Selkirk, a native of Largo in Fife. History relates that in 1704, while serving on an exploratory mission in the Pacific, Selkirk became embroiled in a quarrel with his captain. As a means of terminating both argument and acquaintance, Selkirk made what turned out to be a rash move. He requested to be put ashore on the uninhabited island of Mas a Tierra. Evidently he assumed rescue would be imminent, but he had to wait four years and four months before being picked up.

During his stay on the island Selkirk chased, befriended, ate and clothed himself in wild goat. Upon finally being rescued by the Duke, a privateer, he was speechless.

Aerial navigation to Robinson Crusoe Island is straightforward: from Valparaiso head into the setting sun. Approaching, banking round its cliff faces, you shudder at the enormity of what the island represents. It is the peak of an oceanic mountain range, possibly of Andean scale, just breaking the ocean's surface.

A six-seater Cessna is about as big a



plane as the island's earth strip can accommodate. The wind-buffed landing feels distinctly tight. My fellow passengers were all zoologists. Large seal populations (much depleted since Selkirk) attract students from afar. By a windswept shack, amid improbable swaths of red poppies, other regular users of the air service were waiting in boxes: live lobsters bound for the markets of Valparaiso and Santiago.

There are no proper roads and few, if any, vehicles on Robinson Crusoe. For reasons of topography, the sole town, San Juan Bautista, is situated at the other end of the 12-mile island from the airstrip. The only way to get there is by boat, and the island's fishermen provide the taxi service.

San Juan is green. Trees, foliage and flowers appear to have the upper hand in the town's development. Large, white lilies grow down the centres of grass streets. Here and there tethered goats keep things in check. Buildings are modest, wooden and one storey. National Park rangers wander around on horseback.

The effects of isolation on life, which adapts, fills niches and evolves, are more apparent on an island than on mainland. Hence huge tortoises on the Galapagos. And on Robinson Crusoe, golden humming birds and 57 endemic plant species, 31 of which are "endangered" and 16 "vulnerable" as a result of man, goat and immigrant mainland species.

## When to go

The northern winter corresponds with the southern summer, so the best time to go is between now and March.

## How to get there

The only airline with direct services from the UK to the Chilean capital Santiago is British Airways (0345 222111), and the lowest official fare is £879. Lower fares are available through discount agents such as Journey Latin America (0181-747 3108), which sells BA tickets for £626, or flights via Caracas on Viasa for £588. At Santiago you have to transfer from the international to the domestic airport in the suburb of Cerillos for the air-taxi flight to the island. Contact Lassa (00 56 2 273 4309) which has scheduled flights in January and February, costing \$375 (about £250) per person round-trip. For the rest of the year, Lassa operates an air charter service - five people staying for three days would pay \$2,000 (about £1,350) in total.

I stayed at one of the San Juan's central guest houses, owned by the Green family. On arrival at Villa Green, travel-weary guests are greeted with a large plate of lobster, accompanied by a glass of white wine. Señor Green's father came from Glasgow before the war and settled on Crusoe. And his son, Robinson, was my guide.

On Crusoe you almost feel obliged to explore. Selkirk's cave is still there. But forget the notion of palm trees and the bleached white sands of Defoe's Caribbean fiction. Robinson Crusoe is a temperate island. Selkirk may even have felt at home with the vista of grey boulders and shingle.

The focal point of the Robinson Cru-



On Crusoe Island you feel obliged to explore

photograph: Tony Morrison

soe story and a place of pilgrimage for any castaway spotter is Selkirk's look-out place. From San Juan, where Selkirk established himself, a well-beaten path winds its way up to a practically sheer mountain face. At the top you find yourself in a cleft two-thirds of the way up the island's highest peak. From here, both ends of the island are just about visible. And a lot of sea.

Unexpectedly, you find two tablets embedded into the rock up here. One, large

and of iron, is a tribute from a Commodore Powell and crew of HMS Topaze, cast in Valparaiso in 1868 and huddled up from the shore line. The other is small, of polished granite, a memorial evidently brought from Scotland in 1983 by a descendant of Selkirk's brother. It is inscribed with some lines of Rob- bie Burns that curiously seem to resonate with the spirit of the place: "till a' the seas gang dry and the rocks melt in the sun".

## SOLO DEPARTURES

Anyone planning to take advantage of a standby airpass will find the chances of getting on board much higher when travelling solo. The latest North American airpass, being marketed in the UK by AirPass Sales (01737 555300), covers the ground from Calgary to San Francisco and Vancouver to Idaho Falls. This unlimited travel pass is offered by the US regional airline, Horizon Air. It allows as many journeys as you wish in a week for £175, or three weeks for £298, travelling on a space-available basis. The carrier has a dense network of flights around the north-western US, spreading into south-western Canada. To get started on the pass, flightbookers (0171-757 2000) has a range of two-centre trips for around £330, combining New York or Chicago with San Francisco - where you can pick up the standby trail.

The ideal adjunct for the lone traveller is membership of Hostelling International, offering low-cost accommodation around the world. Join the appropriate organisation: contact the YHA for England and Wales on 01727 855215; the Scottish YHA on 01786 451181; or the YHA for Northern Ireland on 01232 324733.

David Hempleman-Adams, who was the first person to walk solo to the north magnetic pole, is running a group expedition taking "eight ordinary Britons" to the magnetic pole in April/May 1996. This involves a 300-mile walk from Resolute Bay in Canada's North West Territories. The cost per person is £15,000, and applicants will undergo a full medical (including psychological) assessment before selection. Call 01793 823741 for further details.



## something to declare

### Bargain of the week

Madrid, Milan and Munich are each around two hours' flying time from London, which normally puts them in the £150-plus bracket for return fares. But if you book by 9.30pm today, Air UK (0345 666777) is selling return tickets to each destination for £99 plus tax. You have to travel from Stansted in the next two months, and must stay away a Saturday night. Flights to Copenhagen, Nice and Zurich are also available.

### Visitors' book Crystal Palace Museum, London

"I went into the palace every day in the 1930s."  
- Grace Wilson, London

"It must have been grand..."  
- Don Payjack, Phoenix, Arizona

"It's a pity that many people don't visit this place any more."  
- Chiaki Yokoyama, Tokyo

"I was taken to the top of Shooters Hill by my father to see a big fire in the distance. I was six years old."  
- Mr Heddie, Plumstead

"Why don't we reconstruct it for the Millennium?"  
- C Hiddle, London

### True or false?

#### All business travellers are male

True, at least according to the latest advertisement for the Guy Salmon Chauffeur Service. The service, which takes you from central London to Heathrow airport for £39, has been "welcomed by businessmen at every level".

Presumably the expensive backside of these very executives will be filling the wide seats on British Airways Club Europe: the airline targets the male traveller with the line "Behind every successful businessman there's a comfy seat".

At least some government departments are having second thoughts: a series of travel guides called *Hints for Exporters*.

### A likely story

"Two weeks from only £349, car rental included!"  
- Airtours Florida brochure, Summer '96.

Airtours has used a combination of innovation, aggressive marketing and sheer good value to progress from almost nowhere to become Britain's second-largest tour operator. No surprise, then, that the front cover of the Lancashire-based tour operator's Florida brochure should offer a fly-drive holiday in Florida for less than £700 for a couple.

The company has developed a keen eye for keeping costs down, including switching this year to Orlando's second airport, Sanford, where landing fees are lower.

To the passenger picking up his or her rental car, arriving in Sanford is very convenient since the hire companies are based on site. In under an hour from landing, you can set off on your inclusive holiday in which the only extra you expect to pay is for fuel.

You turn to page 21 as instructed and see you have to leave for Florida in the first two weeks in May, straddling the bank holiday. Fine. Here is my cheque, and all I need do now is pay for petrol. Or is it?

The small print warns of "additional local charges from Dollar", the car hire company. These turn out to be a baffling series of extras, covering (take a deep breath):

1. Loss or damage waiver: the sort of basic insurance you might

assume comes with any rental car. If you don't pay your \$14.99 a day, you won't be allowed to drive away unless you can produce a credit card with at least \$1,500 of spare credit, and agree to be responsible for the total cost of the car in the event of an accident.

2. Supplemental liability insurance: the basic third-party cover is limited to just \$10,000, the going rate these days in the American courts for a broken finger nail let alone anything more damaging; so Airtours recommends this insurance, too, costing \$10.99 a day.

3. The airport access fee of \$3 a day.

4. A "handling fee" also of \$3 a day.

5. Florida's state surcharge of \$2.05 per day.

6. Tax of 6.5 per cent on all the above.

7. Airport road tolls of \$3 each way.

The Airtours "free car rental" thereby costs £320, without taking into account little extras such as fuel, insurance for a second driver (£47) and a surcharge for a driver aged 21-24 (£121).

A cynic would suggest that the only "free" thing about free car rental offers is that Dollar provides the cars to Airtours for free, in return for the right to levy all manner of fees on the hapless holidaymaker.

Alternatively, you could just buy an Amtrak rail pass for the eastern part of North America, costing \$179 (about £116) for 15 days' train travel, reaching as far north as Montreal and as far west as New Orleans...

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Simon Calder makes a video postcard in Weymouth









# Money

INDEPENDENT WEEKEND • SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER 1995

"Never before has there been a bull market with such broad participation. This is not a good sign. God forbid what happens when the chickens come home to roost"

The battle of wits between the bears and the bulls on Wall Street gets more fascinating by the week. If one defining characteristic of a bull market is that it is able to shrug off bad news, then this weekend the bull market in New York – and with it the hopes of those who think the London stock market should follow it higher – must be diagnosed as being still very much alive.

On Tuesday last week, the US stock market wobbled badly in the morning, falling 50 points in barely an hour, led down by the same technology stocks that have led the market higher for most of the past 10 months.

It was enough to prompt renewed fears that this bull market is finally on its last legs, after a run that has carried it up by a good 25 per cent so far this year.

As I have noted here before, traditional valuation measures on Wall Street are already at their lowest levels for years. The dividend yield is at levels last seen before the 1929 and 1987 crashes. The market overall is selling on a price/earnings multiple of 17. The historical average is 13

times earnings – which means the current rating can only last as long as profits keep rising strongly.

This will only happen if the economy continues to pick up sharply after its summer pause. This, to judge by the available evidence, is still probable – but the margin for error at the current market levels diminishes daily.

No wonder Wall Street analysts are so frantically poring over the latest earnings figures for clues about the trend in profits growth.

Small wonder, too, that it should be earnings figures from a technology company, this time Motorola, that sent technology stocks and the market as a whole into its wobble last week.

The odds must be that it will be a profits warning from a big US company that finally prompts Wall Street's correction when it comes – that is, if it is not precipitated by an unexpected move by the Federal Reserve on interest rates instead.

It would be astonishing if Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Fed, was not now becoming exercised by the



JONATHAN DAVIS  
INVESTMENTS

emerging signs of overheating on Wall Street.

It would matter less if other traditional warning signals were not also now flashing so heavily. The American private investor has never had so much money invested in mutual funds. Many fear that if markets do start to fall, there could be a panic as they all rush to unload their holdings.

Listen, for example, to Barton Biggs, Morgan Stanley's chief global strategist, and one of Wall Street's most respected thinkers. "Never before has there been a bull market with such broad participation," he says. "This is not a good sign. God forbid what happens

when the chickens come home to roost."

But just as the market was able to shrug off its last wobble back in July, when technology stocks were also at the centre of the action, so it seemed to have recovered most of its poise by the end of the week. And there are still plenty of highly paid Wall Street pundits who reckon that the market has higher to go still. Among them are well-known market watchers in the US such as Abby Cohen of Goldman Sachs and Elaine Gazarelli, both of whom expect better things, at least for the next few months.

The cause of the bulls can only have been heightened by news that Joe Glanville, a vaudeville character who commanded great influence over Wall Street in the early 1980s with his loud and vigorous views on the direction of the market, is suddenly back on the scene arguing the opposite way. In the weekly stock market newspaper *Barron's* a fortnight ago, he said there is every chance of a 1929-style crash happening again – and it will happen "before the end of November".

Now, normally it is the safest of safe bets that what Joe Glanville thinks is the exact opposite of what is going to happen. His record as a market pundit is unrivalled, but only for its inaccuracy. Studies of the performance of the thousands of stock market newsletters in the US in recent years demonstrate convincingly that his record is abysmal. Anybody who followed his advice would be seriously out of pocket by now.

But, as in life, so in the stock market. Every dog has his day, and maybe even Joe is about to strike lucky. One nerve he has clearly struck is the anxiety the month of October creates among investors.

In both 1929 and 1987 it was in October that the infamous crashes happened. In 1989 and 1990, it also fell sharply in the month. What's more, when the big crashes did come, they followed precisely the same kind of unrelenting upward movement for many months that we have seen this year.

In a business as easily spooked as the stock market, folk memory counts for a lot – and you can be sure that if a big correction does occur this

month, it could easily slip over into something worse, as investors compete to outscar each other with tales of what horrors lie ahead.

At the moment, however, optimism remains the order of the day. Any risk that the US might be flirting with recession appears to have passed, and American industry – having picked itself up by its boot straps five years ago – is now going through one of its most gung-ho phases.

If it lasts, it may even do some good for Bill Clinton's prospects in the next presidential election.

Those who think Wall Street has shot its bolt must contend with the mounting evidence that the economic and political cycles are now firmly back in sync.

They went badly awry in 1992, when the last recession effectively did for former president George Bush. The market may be at scary levels, and will have its long-overdue 5-10 per cent correction soon. But the re-emergence of Joe Glanville has persuaded me that there may still be one more leg to this bull market after all.



## INSIDE STORIES

### Speed trap

The perils of cheap motor insurance  
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### Growing pains

The cost of reproduction  
page 28

### Will power

Ensuring a clear inheritance  
page 30

## And the numbers are . . . rosy for Britain's great national pastime

By Clifford German

It was Christmas Eve last year when ball number 39 first came up in the National Lottery – and it has never been in the winning frame since, making it unquestionably the rarest winner since the Great National Pastime began. Numbers 6, 7, 13, and 35 have only won four times, including bonus balls, in the 47 draws to date.

By contrast 22 has won 12 times, 5 has won 11 times, and 28 has won 10 times, followed by 16, 21, 25, 31, 38, 41 and 44, all of which have appeared nine times. If there is any justice, which there probably isn't, most of these should be due for a rest this week.

If, like me, you despair of winning by banking on the number of appearances for each number balancing out over the long run, perhaps you would prefer to look at numbers that have been out of the limelight for a while. Apart from 39, number 6 has not won since week 22, number 36 won last week but had missed out since week 23, while 9 and 13 have not made it since week 28. Yet number 10, which used to be a rare bird, has now come up four times in the last seven weeks.

Although many punters still use birthdays as a basis for choosing their numbers, in spite of scoffing by gambling correspondents, there is reason to believe the vast majority of punters doctor their birthday-based selections in order to gen-

erate higher numbers and spread their six selections across the whole range from 1 to 49.

But winning numbers do bunch quite frequently and when they do they tend to produce big winners. So on 17 December, when the first five numbers were under 20, there were only two winners and when it happened again, on 8 July, there was only one, who pocketed the highest prize of £2.7m. On 7 January, the highest winning number was 32 and there was no big winner at all, and on 25 February the highest number was 33 and a single winner scooped £7m.

On 10 December all six winning numbers were in the top half of the range, the lowest winning number was 26, and the bonus ball was 28. There was just one winner. But on 17 June, when the lowest number was 27 and the bonus was 2, there were seven prize-winners. On 29 July the lowest winning number was 28 and the bonus ball was 11 and there were three winners. If there is pattern, it suggests families may be choosing numbers based on ages rather than birthdays.

So far the lottery has created 109 instant millionaires, and the sheer size of the payouts has attracted criticism, not least at the Labour Party conference last week. Most punters, if asked individually, say they would not mind if the maximum payout was capped at £1m, in line with premium bonds and the

typical pools jackpot, but the evidence suggests the prospect of a mega-million payout does increase ticket sales.

Gross sales have steadied out at around £65m a week in normal weeks, and the prize pool is running at just under £30m, but the pool swells to more than £40m in roll-over weeks, when the jackpot from the previous week has not been won and is added to the prize money for the following week. Sales rise to almost £75m in roll-over weeks. The last time the jackpot went unclaimed was 9 September, although the combination of winning numbers then was not particularly surprising.

A winner last week means an ordinary week is on the cards today, and sales of lottery tickets will have to wait another week to top £30m. Virginia Bottomley may well be right: Britain has the most successful lottery, for its size, world-wide.

Whether that is something to boast about depends on your point of view. Massive interest in the lottery used to be the prerogative of poor countries like Ireland, Spain and Brazil, where wealth was only accessible to most people in dreams. Now millions of Britons support the lottery because they see it as the only way to attain the prosperity and security they long for. I wonder if Tony Blair can change that.

National Lottery: winning numbers											
Winners	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Weeks since last win
1											4
2											13
3											26
4											8
5											1
6											5
7											4
8											2
9											7
10											5
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43											7
44											1
45											2
46											7
47											1
48											2
49											7

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS



## money

## Home is where the mortgage protection premiums are

By James Hipwell

Borrowers hit by the loss of state benefits if they lose their source of income face more misery when they apply for mortgage protection policies to replace the state aid.

In the past, premiums were standard. But some lenders are planning to charge different rates depending on clients' occupations and their likelihood of claiming because of redundancy, illness or accident.

Those in low-paid jobs susceptible to redundancy could end up paying more than double the rates of high-salaried professionals. A manual worker living in an expensive area of the country could end up paying the same premium for this insurance as an accountant in a well-appointed detached home in Surrey.

But it's not just the low-paid who could feel it in the pocket. With merger mania having gripped the mortgage-lending world, it is employees of big banks and building societies who are considered a bad risk.

You have only to look at those towns where there is a Halifax branch right next to an old Leeds Permanent branch to realise the threat of redundancy facing many building society personnel. The Halifax, having swallowed up the Leeds, aims to get its full stock market listing in 1997, when it will become answerable to shareholders hating for higher profits.

A spokesman for Cornhill Insurance, which itself does not offer stand-alone mortgage protection insurance, says the people most likely to be hit by high premiums work in financial services and for nationalised industries. The privatisation of nationalised industries is another risk-enhancing situation. British Rail staff could find the premiums on their mortgage protection policies going through the roof.

This sort of insurance has become more widely available (and more essential) since the Government brought in controversial changes to income support rules on 1 October. From now on if you contract a serious illness or are made redundant, you should ask who is going to pay your mortgage while you're not earn-

ing. You certainly can't rely on the state to bail you out.

Borrowers taking a new loan from now on have been told it will be their responsibility to meet interest payments for the first nine months after losing a job. The message coming out of Kenneth Clarke's last Budget, which proposed the benefit changes, was if you haven't got mortgage protection insurance, get it.

The Chancellor has refused to back down, and unless he does so in the Budget next month it looks as though this insurance will become a must for homeowners. But it is not cheap, nor is it always available. Most lenders charge between £3 and £8 per £100 of cover needed per month. For cover giving protection against accident, sickness and unemployment, NatWest charges £3 while National & Provincial, on the pricey side, asks for £7.57. So, for a borrower wishing to cover monthly mortgage repayments of £500, the cost would be £15 a month with the bank and £36.85 with the building society.

A more innovative pricing structure props up the Cheltenham & Gloucester's scheme, Protection Plus, where premiums are calculated according to the amount of your loan, not on the amount of cover taken. This means the premium remains the same even if the mortgage rate goes up and guarantees that the mortgage instalment will always be paid in full up to a maximum of £1,300 per month. The lender charges 50p per £1,000 of the loan insured, a reduction of nearly 20 per cent since the changes to income support came into effect.

C&G chief Andrew Longhurst says: "Homeowners will now get less state help with their mortgage payments should they fall ill or lose their jobs, so it's vital that they are adequately covered. We're trying to give our borrowers as much help as we can."

Mortgage protection insurance could become another compulsory insurance, along with buildings and contents and some form of life insurance. Homeowners must be wondering where the soaring costs of home ownership will end.



Is disaster just around the corner?

But mortgage protection policies still need reshaping to meet practical needs. Most lenders say you are not allowed to trigger the payments when it suits you. You have to make a claim, usually within 30 days of whatever it is that is stopping you from making mortgage repayments.

Say, for example, you're out earning because you have been made redundant. You have to make a claim within 30 days and your mortgage repayments will be paid for a year starting in one month's time. The first year might not be the problem, however, if you have a generous redundancy settlement. It is the protracted period of unemployment a year later, or a year after that, where the insurance payouts could really help.

With motor insurance you get a reduced premium if you agree to pay for, say, the first £500 of repairs following an accident. A similar arrangement could prevail with mortgage protection insurance so that borrowers get cheaper premiums if they agree to pay their first three monthly mortgage repayments after being made redundant. The inflexibility of so many lenders' schemes means some homeowners will really feel it in the pocket if ever they have to make a claim.

James Hipwell is deputy editor of Your Mortgage magazine

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مكتبة الادب



# Take a look at the motor insurance you just bought. It says 'comprehensive'. But is it?

By Nigel Richards



Too little too late? A small saving in premium may cost a lot if the insurer will not pay out fully after an accident. Photograph: Jeff Moore

**W**hy do sensible shoppers seemingly throw caution to the wind when buying motor insurance? For most people this is one of their most significant annual outlays, yet many hunt for the cheapest offer, assuming all motor policies are identical in every respect but price.

Tempted by advertisements promising to save pounds, motorists will ring round for quotations, without stopping to consider policy cover or claims service.

Motor policies are not the same, not even fully comprehensive policies. The standard of service at the time of a claim can differ from one insurer to another.

There is no point in buying a cheap policy only to discover, when a claim occurs, that you do not have the cover which you thought you had, or that your insurer, who was so keen to take your premium, is not so keen to part with money for a claim.

Unfortunately, few people actually question telesales staff as to precisely what the policy does cover, and what it does not.

Ten years ago the ability to find the cheapest quotation in the market was limited. But today, thanks to new technology, over 100 different motor schemes can be checked in less time than it used to take to check a single one.

The computer can generate the pro-

posals forms and all the client has to do is to sign and date the document. This ability to handle larger volumes of inquiries has led to the growth of telesales operations and the motorist has been encouraged to shop around for the cheapest quotations.

It is now a simple process for a broker to find the insurer offering the lowest rate for a given risk. Insurers have to be competitive on brokers' quotation systems if they are to attract business. Similarly, direct insurers have to ensure consistently competitive rates against the broker market if they are to attract and, more importantly, retain business.

This competition has benefited the motorist. Premiums have fallen on average by about 15 per cent in the last 12 months and as a result the insurers have been compelled to become more efficient.

It is not all good news, however. Having made it so easy for customers to change insurers, the percentage of those renewing with their existing insurers has fallen.

To combat this loss, insurers have to attract increasing numbers of new clients and incur considerable expenditure in both marketing and quotation costs. Some insurers find that they are having to provide as many as 10 quotations for every new risk that is accepted.

These increased costs are ultimately funded by the motorist - and primar-

ily by those who never change insurers. To look at it another way, if motorists stopped shopping around for cheaper insurance, insurers' overheads and therefore all premiums should actually fall.

The need for insurers to improve the number of accepted quotations has seen two worrying developments.

In order to achieve cheaper premiums some companies now offer comprehensive policies with reduced cover. For example, the policy may not include personal accident, medical, contents, radio or car window cover. Such policies may well be suited to some, but the danger is that these contracts are still sold as comprehensive policies - without the limitations being explained.

It is too late to find out, following a claim, what a small saving in premium has cost in real terms; or that for a similar premium a policy offering conventional comprehensive cover could have been secured. The practice of marketing these policies as comprehensive should be ended.

The second concern relates to excesses. This is the term used for the amount that the insured motorist has to pay personally in the event of a claim.

There are two types of excess. A voluntary excess, where the client can secure a reduction in premium by agreeing to pay, for example, "the first £100" of any claim, and a compulsory

excess, demanded by the insurer to reduce the risk. Both should clearly be identified to the client at the quotation stage.

Regrettably, this is not always so in the case of compulsory excesses, where the excess is part of the basic policy wording. This is often the case with the direct market, where a compulsory excess of £250 or more is quite common.

These excesses enable insurers to offer lower premiums, which the motorist may then compare to premiums for policies without an excess, not realising they are not like-for-like.

Any excess applicable under a policy should always be indicated to customers prior to their acceptance of the cover.

Purchasing motor insurance is not, therefore, simply a matter of finding the cheapest deal. You may well find a direct insurer offering favourable rates and cover but check also with a registered broker.

In the time it takes direct insurers to quote their single product to you, a broker will have checked numerous schemes and be able to provide professional independent advice on the most suitable product for your individual needs.

The broker can do this and still be competitive with the direct market.

Nigel Richardson is Motor Schemes Manager at RAC Insurance. The Independent is introducing a Motor Insurance Question and Answer service for readers, which will be provided by RAC Insurance Services. If you have any queries please write to "Motor Insurance Q&A" c/o the Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Answers will be published every four weeks. Unfortunately we cannot intervene in existing disputes or return documents.

## WHEN YOU INSURE...

### Do

Forget the idea that all policies are the same and the only deciding factor is price. Do you really need to change insurers? If you have received good service, especially at the time of a claim, think hard and fast before changing. If you do decide to change, ring around, but do not forget the registered broker, who is duty-bound to act primarily in your best interest, not the insurers.

### Don't

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## money



The costly bunch: Regardless of economies of scale, children are not a sound investment

## Congratulations. It's a girl. And, boy, is it going to cost you

Justin Urquhart-Stewart on the third stage in man's financial life

**T**hey say that children learn language from the moment of birth. I wonder if they can differentiate between the "Ahh" of the cooing parent when seeing their beloved newborn and the "Aargh!" of the parent when seeing the cost of the equipment for their beloved newborn.

From that moment we realise this baby is not a sound financial investment. To be fair, that is not why we decide to have children, but it is certainly worth bearing in mind when embarking on starting a family.

There is never a good time to start a family, but that is no reason for us not to make some preparations. Before going any further consider your financial situation. You may both be currently working, and possibly both wish to carry on with your careers. These days this is commonplace but still needs planning.

It is not just a question of maternity leave, but the impact your change of circumstances can have on your family's income, as well as outgoings. Those spur-of-the-moment holidays and treats look as

though they are quite likely to become a fond memory. Adjust your purse's expectations now - that way you are less likely to be depressed when all you seem to have in it is an echo and a sticky sweetie paper.

**Preparation** *Entitlements:* If both of you are working then you will need to check with your personnel department about statutory maternity pay. If you are self-employed you may be entitled to state maternity allowance. If in doubt, help can be obtained from Social Security offices or your nearest child health clinics.

Also, if you wish to continue to work on a full- or part-time basis, now is the time to consider the alternatives and the reaction of your employer. This may seem obvious but it is important to start looking at all the possible financial implications.

The good news is that you will be able to claim child allowance. This is payable irrespective of your income and can be an extremely helpful support. I found that having it paid into a separate account was very useful for those extra unexpected baby costs. *Kiz:* To paraphrase somebody, "Never in the field of

human endeavour has so much been spent on someone so little". It is hardly believable that so much equipment is going to be required and at such a cost. Make a list of what you will need and if ANYONE offers to provide you with anything on the list - even second-hand - accept it. Whether it is cots, buggies or highchairs the list will grow in direct proportion to your ability to pay for it.

**Key areas to consider** *Education:* Whether you are planning private education or not, now is the time to start putting money aside. If you go private, then be prepared to put aside significant sums each month from now on. This could be over £150 per month. The rule is don't try and cover it all but at least try and cover the worst. More importantly for many is the ability to pay for university. This could be over £3,000 each year at present values, and don't rely on getting a grant.

The art is to start early, and I prefer flexible schemes, not ones just tied to education. As this is hopefully a five-year-plus investment then look at Peps, which can provide a good tax-free return with a lot of flexibility. Care here, though. Look at the charges and the quality of the provider. You can have these managed for you or choose your own investments if you wish, albeit with some advice.

*Insurance:* Now there will be at least three of you, it is time to consider what would happen if either of you were not around. See if your job includes life cover, and if not consider some term insurance. This pays out if you die within a period, either as a lump sum or an income.

*How much?* Add up all areas of income and deduct the amount your family would be entitled to if you died. The balance is the amount of cover you need.

An important element here is critical illness. You can be left very short if the breadwinner of the family is struck with an illness and cannot work. Again check with your employer first and then look to private cover. But take care. It can be expensive, so only look for it to provide some help.

*Savings, Investments and Pensions:* Although your insurance schemes may cover the dire emergencies, it is vital to establish not only a short-term emergency fund, but long-term investments as well. Starting a family is expensive, so don't worry if you cannot save much now. But don't use that as a reason for too long.

If you are like me, I find it best to have the money siphoned off at pay day by standing orders before I can get my sticky fingers on it. Regular savings schemes into unit and investment trusts are very straightforward and low cost. You can protect them from tax in a Pep and at least you can have a choice.

As for pensions, if you have not done so, start one. If you do not have a company pension then put some time aside to evaluate a private one. You have lots of choice, so shop around. Think of quality though. You want good returns in the long term, not a one-year wonder.

*Wills:* I am very boring about wills, but I cannot underline enough how important it is to set out sound financial arrangements for those you leave behind. I would go further and say that it is unfair on your family if you do not.

*Other Issues:* Having a baby often elicits gifts. Without wishing to appear callous, I would suggest prohibiting potential donors such as godparents.

As expensive as it may have been, I have not been able to find a practical use for the 14-inch gold-plated spoon kindly given to me by a godparent. The donation of National Savings certificates or some cash into a National Savings Account would do nicely.

Finally, if you do have any money left I can recommend to parents doing the late feed the purchase of a pair of radio headphones capable of getting the World Service.

The author is business development director at Barclays Stockbrokers.

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Your questions  
answered by a  
panel from Coop-  
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QUESTION TIME

I have made provision for my retirement, aged 62, in 2005. My company pension will provide 30/60 of my final salary and free standing Additional Voluntary Contributions and PEPs (roughly 50 per cent in each) will make up the balance to the maximum permitted 40/60.

I now have the option to retire at 60. By making monthly contributions, how can I best make up the difference between what will be a reduced pension of 28/60 in 2003 and the 40/60 maximum for these two years (2003/5)?

The difference is more than 12/60 for two years. You envisage your free standing AVCs and PEPs providing 10/60 from age 62. By retiring at age 60 the level of income from these will also be reduced. The shortfall is more than 2/60 for life.

AVCs and Peps remain the most efficient means of providing for your retirement assuming that you are not contributing at the maximum rates already. If you are, Tessa's, National Savings and unit trust savings plans could be considered.

The decision is complicated by future changes in taxation and interest rates. We suggest you seek indepen-

dent financial advice to obtain a view based on your full circumstances.

I have a Tessa which I took out nearly five years ago and is due to mature early next year. Can I reinvest all the proceeds in a new Tessa?

Tessas first became available in January 1991, so the first accounts will be maturing next January. The rules allow you to roll over capital from the first Tessa, up to a maximum of £9,000, into a new Tessa. However, you cannot roll over the interest so you will have to find an alternative home for this. Other than this the same rules apply to the new Tessa as the old Tessa, that is a maximum of £9,000 capital invested over five years. You can only hold one Tessa at a time.

Readers should send their questions regarding financial and investment matters to our panel of experts at Question Time, Personal Finance Department, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Questions will be sent to Coopers & Lybrand and a selection will appear in Money.



## FEAR OF FINANCE Clifford German



A million small shareholders who bought TSB shares in 1986 will find themselves holding the same number of shares in Lloyds TSB, and each is likely to be worth about 20p more than their present TSB holdings were worth before the bid. Their investment will also be valued around three times the price they paid nine years ago, and they will get a special dividend of 68p a share net as an additional reward for their tenacity.

Shed no tears either for the TSB executives who may get the chop. They will be well rewarded for their loss of office, although because of the way the deal is structured it is the Lloyds Bank senior executives who stand to get the profitable options.

But this is not a public utility being taken over. There is no regulator calling for a better deal for customers as part of the price of letting the bid go through, and there will be no sops for customers in the shape of reductions in their bank charges.

Lloyds Bank's chief executive, Sir Brian Pittman, is promising the savings made from the merger will enable the new bank to sell financial services more efficiently. But TSB customers are unlikely to see any immediate reward in the shape of better service, and in practice many of them will find their handy local branches shut and the business transferred to a local Lloyds Bank branch which may or may not be as convenient.

They can always vote with their feet and move their accounts to another

bank or building society, or to one of the new generation of telephone-based banks like First Direct.

Customers do switch banks more often than they used to. But the banking marketplace which for so long was dominated by the Big Five clearing banks, before building societies began to offer full banking services with cheque-books and cash cards, is contracting again.

The biggest visible effect is in the closure of branches and the centralisation of services which used to be available locally.

The banks argue that centralisation is essential to take advantage of technology and streamline their costs, even if the result is massive job losses in the industry which used to be synonymous with job security for life.

This column has no brief to argue that bank and building society staff should be immune from the pressures that have worked their way through manufacturing industry and are now devastating service industries too.

But the banks and building societies should remember that they already have a bad public image, which further dislocation can only aggravate.

You cannot win business by providing remote and error-prone services. The great majority of customers are not yet ready for banking by remote control, and the time may soon come when a friendly face is again recognised as the best sales line of all.

## Best borrowing rates

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Coventry BS	0800 126125	4.75 to 1/1/98	85	£250	—
1st Mortgage Securities	0500 050055	5.75 to 1/1/98	75	£275	—
Britannia BS	01249 655971	7.24 for 5 years	95	£300	—
TSB	Local branch	8.54 to 30/6/05	95	£250	Free valuation
<b>Variable rates</b>					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	1.79 for 1 year	95	—	£150 cashback
Halifax BS	0800 834825	4.99 to 30/11/97	90	—	Free val, £250 cashback
Nottingham Imperial	0800 340566	5.49 for 3 years	90	—	—
National Counties BS	01372 739702	6.49 for 5 years	70	—	—

PERSONAL LOANS	Telephone	APR	Fixed monthly payments	With insurance	Without insurance
<b>Unsecured</b>			£3,000 for 3 years		
Midland Bank	Local branch	15.40	£116.54	£103.14	
N&P BS	0800 808080	15.50	£118.22	£103.29	
Yorkshire Bank	0113 231 5324	15.50	£119.34	£103.34	
<b>Secured</b>			Max adv %	Max term	
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	8.80	95	2 to 25 years	
Royal 8 of Scotland	0800 121121	10.10	70	3 years - retirement	
First Direct	0800 242424	10.30	80	Up to 40 years	

TYPICAL OVERDRAFTS	Telephone	Authorised EAR %	Unauthorised EAR %
Barclays Bank	Local Branch	19.20	29.80
Lloyds Bank	Local Branch	19.40	26.80
Net West Bank	Local Branch	18.90	33.25

BEST OVERDRAFTS	Telephone	Authorised EAR %	Unauthorised EAR %
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	9.50	29.50
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	9.50	29.80
Abbey National	0500 200500	9.90	29.50

CREDIT CARDS	Telephone	Card	Min income	Rate pm %	APR %	Annual fee
<b>Standard</b>						
R Fleming (S&P)	0800 282101	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.98	12.40	—
Royal B of Scotland	0800 161616	MasterCard	—	1.14	14.50	—
TSB	Local branch	MasterCard/Visa	—	1.38	17.90	—
<b>Gold cards</b>						
Lloyds Bank	Local branch	MasterCard	£20,000	1.15	16.50	£40
Midland Bank	Local branch	Visa	£20,000	1.30	18.10	£35
M&A International	0800 062620	MasterCard/Visa	£20,000	1.45	18.90	—

STORE CARDS	Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Other methods	% pm	APR
John Lewis	Local store	—	—	1.39	18.00
Marks and Spencer	01244 681681	1.90	25.30	2.00	26.80
Burtons Option	Local store	1.97	26.30	2.21	29.90

APR Annualised percentage rate. EAR effective annual rate.  
All rates subject to change without notice.  
London & Country Freephone 0800 373300

12 October 1995

## Best savings rates

Telephone Number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
<b>INSTANT ACCESS</b>					
City & Metropolitan	0181 484 0814	City Gold	Instant	£10	4.75 Year
Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£500	5.00 Year
Skipton BS	01756 700500	High Street	Instant	£2,000	5.60 Year
				£15,000	5.57 Year

<b>POSTAL ACCOUNTS</b>					
Manchester BS	0161 839 5545	Money by Mail	Postal	£1,000	5.50 Year
Leeds & Holbeck	0113 243 8292	Albion Investment	Postal	£10,000	6.00 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Go Direct	Postal	£20,000	8.10 Year
Leeds & Holbeck	0113 243 8292	Albion Investment	Postal	£25,000	6.20 Year

<b>NOTICE ACCOUNTS</b>					
Bradford & Bingley	0345 248248	Direct 60	60 day P	£5,000	6.30 Year
Bradford & Bingley	0345 248248	Direct 60	60 day P	£15,000	6.75 Year
Catholic BS	0171 222 6736	Jubilee Bond II	90 day	£2,000	6.67 Year
National Counties	01372 742211	90 Second Issue	90 day	£20,000	6.70 Year

<b>MONTHLY INTEREST</b>					
Manchester BS	0161 839 5545	Money by Mail	Postal	£1,000	5.37 Month
Britannia BS	01538 392808	Capital Trust	Postal	£2,000	5.46 Month
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Current Acc Gold	Postal	£10,000	6.08 Month
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Current Acc Gold	Postal	£25,000	6.31 Month

<b>TESSAS (tax-exempt special savings accounts)</b>					
Britannia BS	01538 392804	5 year	£8,315	7.65 F	Year
Sun Banking	01438 744500	5 year	£8,575	7.50 F	Year
Barclays Bank	0800 400100	5 year	£1,000	7.40 F	Year
Tipton & Cosely	0121 557 2551	5 year	£1	7.35	Year

<b>HIGH-INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNTS</b>					
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	Instant	£500	3.20 Year
Halifax BS	01422 333333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£5,000	4.50 3 Mths
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£2,500	5.50 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Current Acc Gold	Postal	£50,000	6.50 Monthly

<b>OFFSHORE (gross)</b>					
Portman CI	01481 822747	Instant Gold	Instant	£5,000	6.20 Year
Alliance & L. IDM	01824 663566	Manorium	Instant	£25,000	6.65 Year
Newcastle GIB	00 350 76168	Nova 90 O'shore	90 day	£50,000	7.25 Year
Portman CI	01481 822747	Gold Bond Acc	3 year	£5,000	7.50 F Year

<b>NATIONAL SAVINGS Accounts &amp; bonds (gross)</b>					
Investment Accounts		1 month	£20	5.25	Year
			£500	5.75	Year
			£25,000	6.00	Year
Income Bonds		3 month	£2,000	6.50	Month
			£25,000	6.75	Month
Capital Bonds	Series 1	5 year	£100	7.75 F	Maturity
First Option Bonds		12 month	£1,000	6.40 F	Year
			£20,000	6.80 F	Year
Scottish Widows' Bond (tax-free)	Series 2	5 year	£500	7.50 F	Month
NS Certificates (tax-free)					
42nd issue		5 year	£100	5.85 F	Maturity
8th Index linked		5 year	£100	3.00+RPI	Maturity
Children's Bond	Issue G	5 year	£25	7.85 F	Maturity

P post only F fixed rate  
All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.  
Chase de Vere Investments plc 0800 526091.

12 October 1995

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(An apparently free choice that offers no real alternative).



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or

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**SCOTTISH WIDOWS**



## money

# Make your will. Before you die

A trip to the solicitor to write a will can be put off indefinitely. The consequences can be grave. By Clifford German

First it was Christmas, Easter and New Year that extended from a single day to an entire week. Then came weeks for national charities for cancer relief and blood donors. Now secular themes are seizing weeks of the year to publicise their causes, and next Monday begins National Will Week.

Making a will ranks somewhere close to fixing that dripping tap or decorating the spare room in the long list of activities that just beg to be put off. And unlike a trip to the dentist a visit to the solicitor to make a will can be put off indefinitely. Indeed 70 per cent of adults over 65 get around to it at all.

That never used to matter much when the majority of ordinary folk lived and died without getting much above the headline, and lived relatively uncomplicated lives, leaving enough to money for a funeral, and a house and a widow's pension if they were lucky.

But increasing personal wealth, a rising divorce rate and the workings of inheritance tax have complicated matters, while the laws governing the disposal of the assets of anyone who dies without a will have changed hardly at all.

The law provides that after debts and taxes have been paid the assets of anyone who dies without making a will have to be divided according to a set formula, which may vary slightly in Scotland. As a general rule if there are children the surviving spouse gets half the estate and the children share the other half. If there are no children but the deceased has parents or other blood relatives still living, the spouse and the relatives of the deceased will be entitled to half each.

Only if there are no children and no surviving parents does the whole estate pass automatically to the surviving husband or wife.

If, however, you are separated but not divorced, your husband or wife will be entitled to a claim on your estate just as if you had still been living together. If they remarry after your death your own children may get nothing when your former partner dies.

But the law of inheritance still does not recognise relationships other than marriage and blood. If you have been living with someone, however long, that person will get nothing when you die even if you have had children, unless you have made a will.

A proper will can save a lot of heart-break and possible hardship, but many people still think it does not matter, or that there will be time enough to make a will later on, or that it is a complicated and time-consuming procedure. Excuses are legion and easy to find. But if you have a reasonable idea of who you want your assets to go to — cash, bank and building society accounts, stocks and shares, property and any valuables you have, like cars, jewellery or postage stamp collections — it is easy enough to draw up a list of where you would like each or all of them to go, or if you prefer them to be sold, how you would like the proceeds divided up. You can also nominate executors to administer your will and make provisions for your funeral and any special requests like organ donation.

Making a will is also a useful way of making an inventory of assets to make sure you do not unwittingly go over the inheritance tax threshold, currently £154,000, and end up incurring tax at 40 per cent on the excess.

Many people simply leave everything to their spouses, but this is never wholly wise especially if both husband and wife die together. But there is no reason why you should not make a few personal bequests of favourite items to favourite godchildren, to charities and to friends and institutions as a token of appreciation. Unexpected gifts are often the most appreciated. Many people now write provisions for their pets into their wills.

Gifts to charities are exempt from inheritance tax. Otherwise, however, sharing out your estate does nothing to reduce the burden of inheritance tax unless you started giving things away well before you died. Various pressure groups urge the Chancellor each year to reduce the tax burden if assets are dispersed to more than one beneficiary.



Act of will: Seventy per cent of adults die without leaving a record of how their assets should be distributed

The simplest way to turn your wishes into a legal document is to go to a solicitor. Most solicitors are willing to draw up a will for you and many now advertise their services in the local Yellow Pages. If you do not have a solicitor it is easy to find one locally who will arrange an interview to talk through your wishes and draw up a will that will make your wishes legally watertight.

When you have an idea of what you want to do and how complicated it might be, it is often wise to ask for an estimate because solicitors have no set scale of charges.

Some solicitors claim to draft a straightforward will for as little as £35, but in the posher suburbs they may

well want £100 or more. For a fee solicitors will also keep a copy of your will, act as executors, and make sure your wishes are carried out.

The cheapest way to make a will is to buy a DIY kit from a legal stationer for a few pounds, complete with instructions on how to write the details and have your signature properly witnessed (remembering of course that witnesses cannot also be beneficiaries). But there can be no guarantee that a DIY will will stand up in court if your wishes are ambiguous.

Alternatively you could write off to a firm like Willmakers, which supplies a will guide and converts your wishes into a proper will, which is returned to you with signing instructions and a

plain English summary. There is a flat fee of £49.50, or £79.50 for "mirror" wills for couples whose wishes are similar. For £17.95 Willmakers also offers forms to create an Enduring Power of Attorney nominating someone to administer your affairs if you are too longer able to do so, and for a further £9.95 a Living Will, which records your wishes on medical treatment and creates a healthcare proxy to help take future decisions.

If you want to make doubly certain that your will can be found when you die you can register its whereabouts on a central database with Central Wills Lodgement Bureau, based in Leicester and Aberdeen (0345-697824) for a fee of £19.99.

## Health market gets healthier

Inspired by oews that the general public spent an extra 4 per cent on private medical insurance last year after three years of virtual stagnation, the top two providers of private medical insurance, Bupa and PPP, launched new campaigns this week to win more customers.

PPP, which claims 27 per cent of the market, launched a £20m marketing campaign emphasising positive health-care programmes instead of simply underwriting insurance risks.

Healthcare for Life will offer a range of four plans, from deluxe to budget, which can provide services appropriate for all age groups. All plans include medical screening services, eye tests and 24-hour access to what it claims is the world's biggest telephone health-information service.

It also plans oew stand-alone or add-on products aimed specifically at women and at individuals with active lifestyles.

Woman's Plan cover includes annual health screens, private out-patient and daycare treatment, £1,000 of pregnancy cover, infertility treatment and hormone replacement therapy. With customers paying the first £50 of each claim the monthly premiums are a flat £35.

The Fast-Lane plan includes health screens, free annual eye test, private and out-patient treatment and £10,000 in the event of critical illness, overseas accident and emergency cover and repatriation costs. With a £50 excess the annual premiums start at £12.52 a month for a 21-year-old, rising with age to £15.63 at 35 and £25.25 at age 50, which is the maximum age for which cover is available. Premiums are the same both for men and women.

Bupa, still the market leader although its share has dipped below 50 per cent in the last 10 years, is increasing maximum cover on its disability income plan from 50 per cent to 75 per cent of gross salary (less long-term state incapacity benefit), with a choice of lifetime cover, cover until retirement and a two-year limited benefit cover.

Critical illness cover provides a lump sum on diagnosis of critical illnesses including cancer, heart attack, stroke, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease and loss of speech, hearing and sight. A tax-free Hospital Cash plan to help recuperation from specific types of surgery is also on offer.

CG

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\*For this example the typical standard mortgage rate used is that of Bradford & Bingley Building Society as at 7th September 1995. Savings based on a house purchase loan of £60,000 taken on an interest only basis over a term of 25 years. Rate assumed: 2.99% in first year (5.3% discount) and 7.99% for the remainder of the term. Savings are based on current rates available from any branch of Bradford & Bingley and are variable.

The Mortgages Direct offer is not available to existing Bradford & Bingley borrowers who are not moving home. For applications through the Society's Mortgages Direct service, the loan must not exceed 75% of the purchase price/valuation (whichever is the lower).  
TYPICAL EXAMPLE: A mortgage of £60,000 completed on September 8th taken out on an "Interest Only" basis, with one capital repayment of £60,000 being made at the end of the term, over 25 years on a purchase price of £80,000 would attract an APR of 7.2% (variable). Over monthly interest only mortgage repayments of £281.44 during the mortgage term. Total amount payable: £164,839.52 includes the mortgage advance of £60,000, £117.30 solicitor's fees (these fees are not applicable to mortgages in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Customers there should contact their local solicitor for details). Selling Fee of £50.00 and accrued interest of £305.61 for the period September 8th to September 30th. In this example, a valuation fee of £145.00 would be payable on application and refunded on completion of the mortgage. Example assumes an interest rate of 6.95% during the first year and this rate applies throughout the term of the loan. This rate is variable and the rate at any point during the loan term may differ from that used in this calculation. A Mortgage Guarantee charge is not payable for this example. Rates quoted are variable, so therefore in the APR. Loans subject to status and valuation. Mortgage security is required. Written quotations are available on request by writing to Bradford & Bingley Building Society, Main Street, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 2LW. Mortgages are only available to persons aged 18 or over.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.  
Bradford & Bingley Building Society is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority for investment business. Head Office, PO Box 88, Conisbrough, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 2LW.

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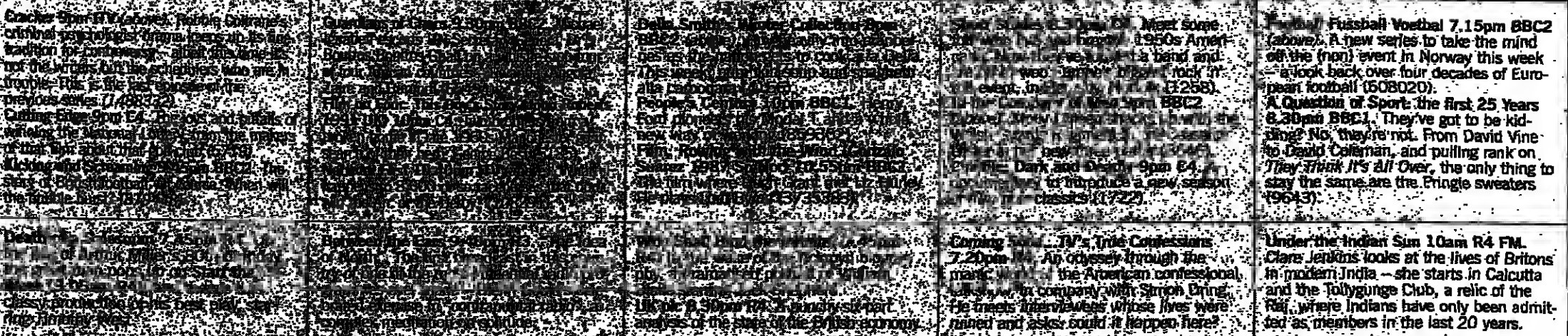
Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss)

Address

Postcode

Telephone No





## ITV/Regions

[illegible]

## Perplexity

And that's all we're going to tell you this time. This is, after all, meant to perplex. Good luck in unravelling it. A copy of the splendid *Chambers Encyclopaedic Dictionary* will be awarded to the sender of the first correct answer opened on 26 October. Entries should be sent to: Saturday Pastimes, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

**30 September competition:**  
Answers: *Segitarius* (guitarist as); archery (hear cry); The condridge (game bird). The condridge, of course, is Archers. Winner: Gareth Wilkins (Birmingham).

At trick four, the ace of spades revealed the bad news. On the next trump lead, West split his honours and, after dummy had ducked, exited with a diamond. All over now, thought South, and he tried to come to hand with the queen of hearts to pick up the remaining trumps. Disaster! West ruffed and that was the fourth defensive trick.

However, there was a rather pleasing safety play available. Before starting on trumps, declarer should have played off the ace and king of diamonds. The play goes as before but, when West is left on lead with his trump, he no longer has a safe diamond exit.



